J. A. FROUDE

SHORT STUDIES ON GREAT SUBJECTS

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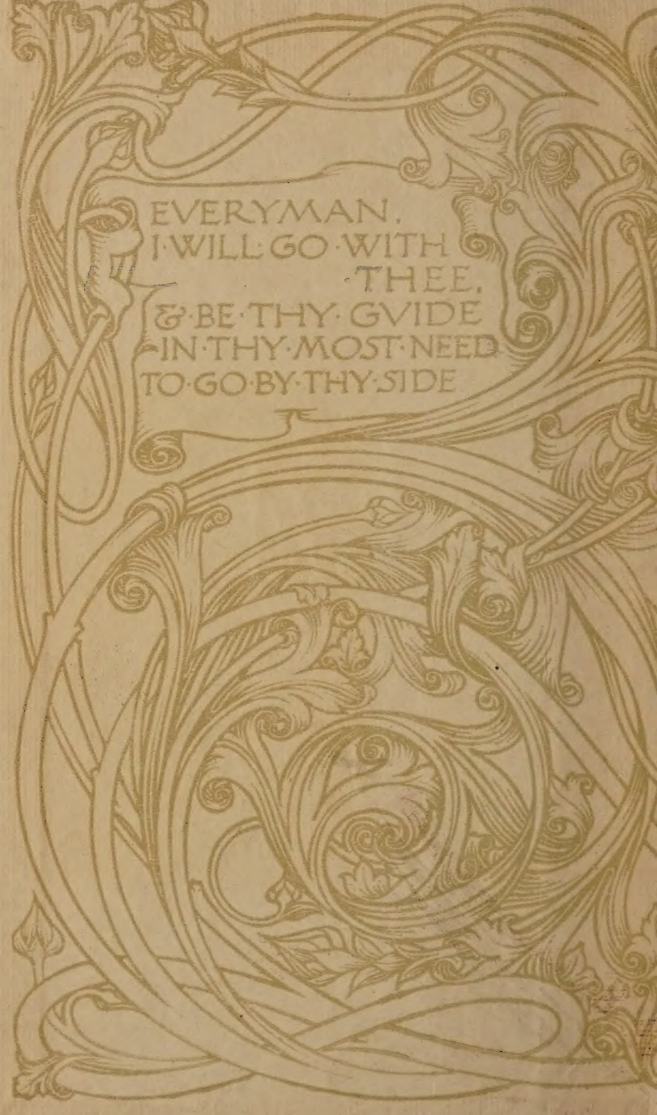
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FROUDE'S SHORT STUDIES ON GREAT SUBJECTS

VOLUME TWO

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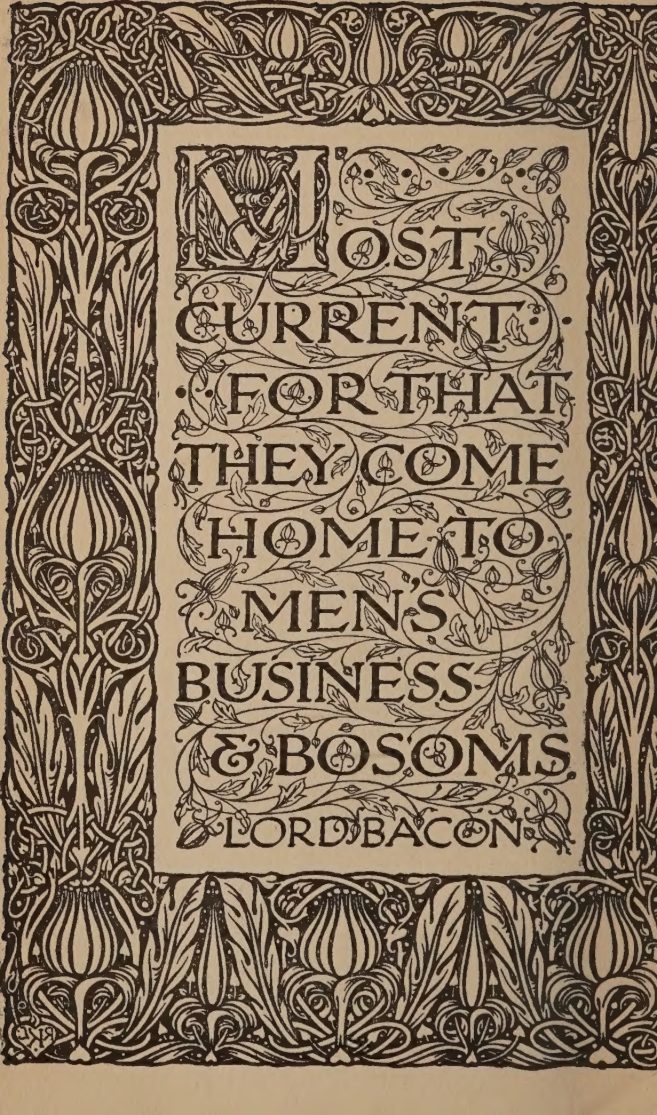
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SHORT STUDIES ON GREAT SUBJECTS BY JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

VOLUME TWO

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CONTENTS

NOTE.—This volume forms the second series of Froude's *Short Studies*, as reprinted in Everyman's Library. The first volume, originally issued in the series with the title *Essays in Literature and History*, contains a general introduction by Mr. Belloc to Froude's work and critical attitude in the *Short Studies*.

	PAGE
THE SCIENCE OF HISTORY	1
TIMES OF ERASMUS AND LUTHER—	
Lecture I.	32
Lecture II.	61
Lecture III.	91
THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON THE SCOTTISH CHARACTER	124
CRITICISM AND THE GOSPEL HISTORY	152
HOMER	184
REPRESENTATIVE MEN.	219
THE CAT'S PILGRIMAGE	240
FABLES AND PARABLES	257
SIR HUGH DE AVALON	264
COMPENSATION	297

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SHORT STUDIES ON GREAT SUBJECTS

THE SCIENCE OF HISTORY

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION FEBRUARY 5, 1864

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I have undertaken to speak to you this evening on what is called the Science of History. I fear it is a dry subject; and there seems, indeed, something incongruous in the very connection of such words as Science and History. It is as if we were to talk of the colour of sound, or the longitude of the rule-of-three. Where it is so difficult to make out the truth on the commonest disputed fact in matters passing under our very eyes, how can we talk of a science in things long past, which come to us only through books? It often seems to me as if History was like a child's box of letters, with which we can spell any word we please. We have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those which do not suit our purpose.

I will try to make the thing intelligible, and I will try not to weary you; but I am doubtful of my success either way. First, however, I wish to say a word or two about the eminent person whose name is connected with this way of looking at History, and whose premature death struck us all with such a sudden sorrow. Many of you, perhaps, recollect Mr. Buckle as he stood not so long ago in this place. He spoke more than an hour without a note—never repeating himself, never wasting words;

laying out his matter as easily and as pleasantly as if he had been talking to us at his own fireside. We might think what we pleased of Mr. Buckle's views, but it was plain enough that he was a man of uncommon power; and he had qualities also—qualities to which he, perhaps, himself attached little value, as rare as they were admirable.

Most of us, when we have hit on something which we are pleased to think important and original, feel as if we should burst with it. We come out into the book-market with our wares in hand, and ask for thanks and recognition. Mr. Buckle, at an early age, conceived the thought which made him famous, but he took the measure of his abilities. He knew that whenever he pleased he could command personal distinction, but he cared more for his subject than for himself. He was contented to work with patient reticence, unknown and unheard of, for twenty years; and then, at middle life, he produced a work which was translated at once into French and German, and, of all places in the world, fluttered the dovecotes of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg.

Goethe says somewhere, that as soon as a man has done anything remarkable, there seems to be a general conspiracy to prevent him from doing it again. He is feasted, fêted, caressed; his time is stolen from him by breakfasts, dinners, societies, idle businesses of a thousand kinds. Mr. Buckle had his share of all this; but there are also more dangerous enemies that wait upon success like this. He had scarcely won for himself the place which he deserved, than his health was found shattered by his labours. He had but time to show us how large a man he was—time just to sketch the outlines of his philosophy, and he passed away as suddenly as he appeared. He went abroad to recover strength for his work, but his work was done with and over. He died of a fever at Damascus, vexed only that he was compelled to leave it uncompleted. Almost his last

conscious words were, " My book, my book! I shall never finish my book! " He went away as he had lived, nobly careless of himself, and thinking only of the thing which he had undertaken to do.

But his labour had not been thrown away. Disagree with him as we might, the effect which he had already produced was unmistakable, and it is not likely to pass away. What he said was not essentially new. Some such interpretation of human things is as early as the beginning of thought. But Mr. Buckle, on the one hand, had the art which belongs to men of genius; he could present his opinions with peculiar distinctness; and, on the other hand, there is much in the mode of speculation at present current among us for which those opinions have an unusual fascination. They do not please us, but they excite and irritate us. We are angry with them; and we betray, in being so, an uneasy misgiving that there may be more truth in those opinions than we like to allow.

Mr. Buckle's general theory was something of this kind: When human creatures began first to look about them in the world they lived in, there seemed to be no order in anything. Days and nights were not the same length. The air was sometimes hot and sometimes cold. Some of the stars rose and set like the sun; some were almost motionless in the sky; some described circles round a central star above the north horizon. The planets went on principles of their own; and in the elements there seemed nothing but caprice. Sun and moon would at times go out in eclipse. Sometimes the earth itself would shake under men's feet; and they could only suppose that earth and air and sky and water were inhabited and managed by creatures as wayward as themselves.

Time went on, and the disorder began to arrange itself. Certain influences seemed beneficent to men, others malignant and destructive, and the world was supposed

to be animated by good spirits and evil spirits, who were continually fighting against each other, in outward nature and in human creatures themselves. Finally, as men observed more and imagined less, these interpretations gave way also. Phenomena the most opposite in effect were seen to be the result of the same natural law. The fire did not burn the house down if the owners of it were careful, but remained on the hearth and boiled the pot; nor did it seem more inclined to burn a bad man's house down than a good man's provided the badness did not take the form of negligence. The phenomena of nature were found for the most part to proceed in an orderly, regular way, and their variations to be such as could be counted upon. From observing the order of things, the step was easy to cause and effect. An eclipse, instead of being a sign of the anger of Heaven, was found to be the necessary and innocent result of the relative position of sun, moon, and earth. The comets became bodies in space, unrelated to the beings who had imagined that all creation was watching them and their doings. By degrees, caprice, volition, all symptoms of arbitrary action, disappeared out of the universe; and almost every phenomenon in earth or heaven was found attributable to some law, either understood or perceived to exist. Thus nature was reclaimed from the imagination. The first fantastic conception of things gave way before the moral; the moral in turn gave way before the natural; and at last there was left but one small tract of jungle where the theory of law had failed to penetrate—the doings and characters of human creatures themselves.

There, and only there, amidst the conflicts of reason and emotion, conscience and desire, spiritual forces were still conceived to exist. Cause and effect were not traceable when there was a free volition to disturb the connection. In all other things, from a given set of conditions, the consequences necessarily followed. With man, the word law changed its meaning; and

instead of a fixed order, which he could not choose but follow, it became a moral precept, which he might disobey if he dared.

This it was which Mr. Buckle disbelieved. The economy which prevailed throughout nature, he thought it very unlikely should admit of this exception. He considered that human beings acted necessarily from the impulse of outward circumstances upon their mental and bodily condition at any given moment. Every man, he said, acted from a motive; and his conduct was determined by the motive which affected him most powerfully. Every man naturally desires what he supposes to be good for him; but to do well, he must know well. He will eat poison, so long as he does not know that it is poison. Let him see that it will kill him, and he will not touch it. The question was not of moral right and wrong. Once let him be thoroughly made to feel that the thing is destructive, and he will leave it alone by the law of his nature. His virtues are the result of knowledge; his faults, the necessary consequence of the want of it. A boy desires to draw. He knows nothing about it: he draws men like trees or houses, with their centre of gravity anywhere. He makes mistakes, because he knows no better. We do not blame him. Till he is better taught he cannot help it. But his instruction begins. He arrives at straight lines; then at solids; then at curves. He learns perspective, and light and shade. He observes more accurately the forms which he wishes to represent. He perceives effects, and he perceives the means by which they are produced. He has learned what to do; and, in part, he has learned how to do it. His after-progress will depend on the amount of force which his nature possesses; but all this is as natural as the growth of an acorn. You do not preach to the acorn that it is its duty to become a large tree; you do not preach to the art-pupil that it is his duty to become a Holbein. You

plant your acorn in favourable soil, where it can have light and air, and be sheltered from the wind; you remove the superfluous branches, you train the strength into the leading shoots. The acorn will then become as fine a tree as it has vital force to become. The difference between men and other things is only in the largeness and variety of man's capacities; and in this special capacity, that he alone has the power of observing the circumstances favourable to his own growth, and can apply them for himself. Yet, again, with this condition, —that he is not, as is commonly supposed, free to choose whether he will make use of these appliances or not. When he knows what is good for him, he will choose it; and he will judge what is good for him by the circumstances which have made him what he is.

And what he would do, Mr. Buckle supposed that he always had done. His history had been a natural growth as much as the growth of the acorn. His improvement had followed the progress of his knowledge; and, by a comparison of his outward circumstances with the condition of his mind, his whole proceedings on this planet, his creeds and constitutions, his good deeds and his bad, his arts and his sciences, his empires and his revolutions, would be found all to arrange themselves into clear relations of cause and effect.

If, when Mr. Buckle pressed his conclusions, we objected the difficulty of finding what the truth about past times really was, he would admit it candidly as far as concerned individuals; but there was not the same difficulty, he said, with masses of men. We might disagree about the characters of Julius or Tiberius Cæsar, but we could know well enough the Romans of the Empire. We had their literature to tell us how they thought; we had their laws to tell us how they governed; we had the broad face of the world, the huge mountainous outline of their general doings upon it, to tell us how they acted. He believed it was all reducible to

laws, and could be made as intelligible as the growth of the chalk cliffs or the coal measures.

And thus consistently Mr. Buckle cared little for individuals. He did not believe (as some one has said) that the history of mankind is the history of its great men. Great men with him were but larger atoms, obeying the same impulses with the rest, only perhaps a trifle more erratic. With them or without them, the course of things would have been much the same.

As an illustration of the truth of his view, he would point to the new science of Political Economy. Here already was a large area of human activity in which natural laws were found to act unerringly. Men had gone on for centuries trying to regulate trade on moral principles. They would fix wages according to some imaginary rule of fairness; they would fix prices by what they considered things ought to cost; they encouraged one trade or discouraged another, for moral reasons. They might as well have tried to work a steam-engine on moral reasons. The great statesmen whose names were connected with these enterprises might have as well legislated that water should run up-hill. There were natural laws, fixed in the conditions of things: and to contend against them was the old battle of the Titans against the gods.

As it was with political economy, so it was with all other forms of human activity; and as the true laws of political economy explained the troubles which people fell into in old times, because they were ignorant of them, so the true laws of human nature, as soon as we knew them, would explain their mistakes in more serious matters, and enable us to manage better for the future. Geographical position, climate, air, soil, and the like, had their several influences. The northern nations are hardy and industrious, because they must till the earth if they would eat the fruits of it, and because the temperature is too low to make an idle life enjoyable. In the

south, the soil is more productive, while less food is wanted and fewer clothes; and in the exquisite air, exertion is not needed to make the sense of existence delightful. Therefore, in the south we find men lazy and indolent.

True, there are difficulties in these views; the home of the languid Italian was the home also of the sternest race of whom the story of mankind retains a record. And again, when we are told that the Spaniards are superstitious, because Spain is a country of earthquakes, we remember Japan, the spot in all the world where earthquakes are most frequent, and where at the same time there is the most serene disbelief in any supernatural agency whatsoever.

Moreover, if men grow into what they are by natural laws, they cannot help being what they are; and if they cannot help being what they are, a good deal will have to be altered in our general view of human obligations and responsibilities.

That, however, in these theories there is a great deal of truth is quite certain; were there but a hope that those who maintain them would be contented with that admission. A man born in a Mahometan country grows up a Mahometan; in a Catholic country, a Catholic; in a Protestant country, a Protestant. His opinions are like his language; he learns to think as he learns to speak; and it is absurd to suppose him responsible for being what nature makes him. We take pains to educate children. There is a good education and a bad education; there are rules well ascertained by which characters are influenced, and, clearly enough, it is no mere matter for a boy's free will whether he turns out well or ill. We try to train him into good habits; we keep him out of the way of temptations; we see that he is well taught; we mix kindness and strictness; we surround him with every good influence we can command. These are what are termed the advantages of a good education: and

if we fail to provide those under our care with it, and if they go wrong, the responsibility we feel is as much ours as theirs. This is at once an admission of the power over us of outward circumstances.

In the same way, we allow for the strength of temptations, and the like.

In general, it is perfectly obvious that men do necessarily absorb, out of the influences in which they grow up, something which gives a complexion to their whole after-character.

When historians have to relate great social or speculative changes, the overthrow of a monarchy or the establishment of a creed, they do but half their duty if they merely relate the events. In an account, for instance, of the rise of Mahometanism, it is not enough to describe the character of the Prophet, the ends which he set before him, the means which he made use of, and the effect which he produced; the historian must show what there was in the condition of the Eastern races which enabled Mahomet to act upon them so powerfully; their existing beliefs, their existing moral and political condition.

In our estimate of the past, and in our calculations of the future—in the judgments which we pass upon one another, we measure responsibility, not by the thing done but by the opportunities which people have had of knowing better or worse. In the efforts which we make to keep our children from bad associations or friends we admit that external circumstances have a powerful effect in making men what they are.

But are circumstances everything? That is the whole question. A science of history, if it is more than a misleading name, implies that the relation between cause and effect holds in human things as completely as in all others, that the origin of human actions is not to be looked for in mysterious properties of the mind, but in influences which are palpable and ponderable.

When natural causes are liable to be set aside and neutralised by what is called volition, the word Science is out of place. If it is free to a man to choose what he will do or not do, there is no adequate science of him. If there is a science of him, there is no free choice, and the praise or blame with which we regard one another are impertinent and out of place.

I am trespassing upon these ethical grounds because, unless I do, the subject cannot be made intelligible. Mankind are but an aggregate of individuals—History is but the record of individual action; and what is true of the part, is true of the whole.

We feel keenly about such things, and when the logic becomes perplexing, we are apt to grow rhetorical about them. But rhetoric is only misleading. Whatever the truth may be, it is best that we should know it; and for truth of any kind we should keep our heads and hearts as cool as we can.

I will say at once, that if we had the whole case before us—if we were taken, like Leibnitz's Tarquin, into the council chamber of nature, and were shown what we really were, where we came from, and where we were going, however unpleasant it might be for some of us to find ourselves, like Tarquin, made into villains, from the subtle necessities of "the best of all possible worlds"; nevertheless, some such theory as Mr. Buckle's might possibly turn out to be true. Likely enough, there is some great "equation of the universe" where the value of the unknown quantities can be determined. But we must treat things in relation to our own powers and position; and the question is, whether the sweep of those vast curves can be measured by the intellect of creatures of a day like ourselves.

The "Faust" of Goethe, tired of the barren round of earthly knowledge, calls magic to his aid. He desires, first, to see the spirit of the Macrocosmos, but his heart fails him before he ventures that tremendous experi-

ment, and he summons before him, instead, the spirit of his own race. There he feels himself at home. The stream of life and the storm of action, the everlasting ocean of existence, the web and the woof, and the roaring loom of time—he gazes upon them all, and in passionate exultation claims fellowship with the awful thing before him. But the majestic vision fades, and a voice comes to him—" Thou art fellow with the spirits which thy mind can grasp—not with me."

Had Mr. Buckle tried to follow his principles into detail, it might have fared no better with him than with " Faust."

What are the conditions of a science? and when may any subject be said to enter the scientific stage? I suppose when the facts of it begin to resolve themselves into groups; when phenomena are no longer isolated experiences, but appear in connection and order; when, after certain antecedents, certain consequences are uniformly seen to follow; when facts enough have been collected to furnish a basis for conjectural explanation, and when conjectures have so far ceased to be utterly vague, that it is possible in some degree to foresee the future by the help of them.

Till a subject has advanced as far as this, to speak of a science of it is an abuse of language. It is not enough to say that there must be a science of human things, because there is a science of all other things. This is like saying the planets must be inhabited, because the only planet of which we have any experience is inhabited. It may or may not be true, but it is not a practical question; it does not affect the practical treatment of the matter in hand. Let us look at the history of Astronomy.

So long as sun, moon, and planets were supposed to be gods or angels; so long as the sword of Orion was not a metaphor, but a fact, and the groups of stars which inlaid the floor of heaven were the glittering trophies of

the loves and wars of the Pantheon, so long there was no science of Astronomy. There was fancy, imagination, poetry, perhaps reverence, but no science. As soon, however, as it was observed that the stars retained their relative places—that the times of their rising and setting varied with the seasons—that sun, moon, and planets moved among them in a plane, and the belt of the Zodiac was marked out and divided, then a new order of things began. Traces of the earlier stage remained in the names of the signs and constellations, just as the Scandinavian mythology survives now in the names of the days of the week: but for all that, the understanding was now at work on the thing; Science had begun, and the first triumph of it was the power of foretelling the future. Eclipses were perceived to recur in cycles of nineteen years, and philosophers were able to say when an eclipse was to be looked for. The periods of the planets were determined. Theories were invented to account for their eccentricities; and, false as those theories might be, the position of the planets could be calculated with moderate certainty by them. The very first result of the science, in its most imperfect stage, was a power of foresight; and this was possible before any one true astronomical law had been discovered.

We should not therefore question the possibility of a science of history, because the explanations of its phenomena were rudimentary or imperfect: that they might be, and might long continue to be, and yet enough might be done to show that there was such a thing, and that it was not entirely without use. But how was it that in those rude days, with small knowledge of mathematics, and with no better instruments than flat walls and dial plates, those first astronomers made progress so considerable? Because, I suppose, the phenomena which they were observing recurred, for the most part, within moderate intervals; so that they could collect large experience within the compass of their natural lives;

because days and months and years were measurable periods, and within them the more simple phenomena perpetually repeated themselves.

But how would it have been if, instead of turning on its axis once in twenty-four hours, the earth had taken a year about it; if the year had been nearly four hundred years; if man's life had been no longer than it is, and for the initial steps of astronomy there had been nothing to depend upon except observations recorded in history? How many ages would have passed, had this been our condition, before it would have occurred to any one, that, in what they saw night after night, there was any kind of order at all?

We can see to some extent how it would have been, by the present state of those parts of the science which in fact depend on remote recorded observations. The movements of the comets are still extremely uncertain. The times of their return can be calculated only with the greatest vagueness.

And yet such a hypothesis as I have suggested would but inadequately express the position in which we are in fact placed towards history. There the phenomena never repeat themselves. There we are dependent wholly on the record of things said to have happened once, but which never happen or can happen a second time. There no experiment is possible; we can watch for no recurring fact to test the worth of our conjectures. It has been suggested, fancifully, that if we consider the universe to be infinite, time is the same as eternity, and the past is perpetually present. Light takes nine years to come to us from Sirius; those rays which we may see to-night when we leave this place, left Sirius nine years ago; and could the inhabitants of Sirius see the earth at this moment, they would see the English army in the trenches before Sebastopol; Florence Nightingale watching at Scutari over the wounded at Inkermann; and the peace of England undisturbed by *Essays and Reviews*.

As the stars recede into distance, so time recedes with them, and there may be, and probably are, stars from which Noah might be seen stepping into the ark, Eve listening to the temptation of the serpent, or that older race, eating the oysters and leaving the shell-heaps behind them, when the Baltic was an open sea.

Could we but compare notes, something might be done; but of this there is no present hope, and without it there will be no science of history. Eclipses, recorded in ancient books, can be verified by calculation, and lost dates can be recovered by them, and we can foresee by the laws which they follow when there will be eclipses again. Will a time ever be when the lost secret of the foundation of Rome can be recovered by historic laws? If not, where is our science? It may be said that this is a particular fact, that we can deal satisfactorily with general phenomena affecting eras and cycles. Well, then, let us take some general phenomenon. Mahometanism, for instance, or Buddhism. Those are large enough. Can you imagine a science which would have[1] *foretold* such movements as those? The state of things out of which they rose is obscure; but suppose it not obscure, can you conceive that, with any amount of historical insight into the old Oriental beliefs, you could have seen that they were about to transform themselves into those particular forms and no other?

It is not enough to say, that, after the fact, you can understand partially how Mahometanism came to be. All historians worth the name have told us something about that. But when we talk of science, we mean something with more ambitious pretences, we mean something which can foresee as well as explain; and, thus

[1] It is objected that Geology is a science: yet that Geology cannot foretell the future changes of the earth's surface. Geology is not a century old, and its periods are measured by millions of years. Yet, if Geology cannot foretell future facts, it enabled Sir Roderick Murchison to foretell the discovery of Australian gold.

looked at, to state the problem is to show its absurdity. As little could the wisest man have foreseen this mighty revolution, as thirty years ago such a thing as Mormonism could have been anticipated in America; as little as it could have been foreseen that table-turning and spirit-rapping would have been an outcome of the scientific culture of England in the nineteenth century.

The greatest of Roman thinkers, gazing mournfully at the seething mass of moral putrefaction round him, detected and deigned to notice among its elements a certain detestable superstition, so he called it, rising up amidst the offscouring of the Jews, which was named Christianity. Could Tacitus have looked forward nine centuries to the Rome of Gregory VII., could he have beheld the representative of the majesty of the Cæsars holding the stirrup of the Pontiff of that vile and execrated sect, the spectacle would scarcely have appeared to him the fulfilment of a rational expectation, or an intelligible result of the causes in operation round him. Tacitus, indeed, was born before the science of history; but would M. Comte have seen any more clearly?

Nor is the case much better if we are less hard upon our philosophy; if we content ourselves with the past, and require only a scientific explanation of that.

First, for the facts themselves. They come to us through the minds of those who recorded them, neither machines nor angels, but fallible creatures, with human passions and prejudices. Tacitus and Thucydides were perhaps the ablest men who ever gave themselves to writing history; the ablest, and also the most incapable of conscious falsehood. Yet even now, after all these centuries, the truth of what they relate is called in question. Good reasons can be given to show that neither of them can be confidently trusted. If we doubt with these, whom are we to believe?

Or again, let the facts be granted. To revert to my simile of the box of letters, you have but to select such facts as suit you, you have but to leave alone those which do not suit you, and let your theory of history be what it will, you can find no difficulty in providing facts to prove it.

You may have your Hegel's philosophy of history, or you may have your Schlegel's philosophy of history; you may prove from history that the world is governed in detail by a special Providence; you may prove that there is no sign of any moral agent in the universe, except man; you may believe, if you like it, in the old theory of the wisdom of antiquity; you may speak, as was the fashion in the fifteenth century, of "our fathers, who had more wit and wisdom than we;" or you may talk of "our barbarian ancestors," and describe their wars as the scuffling of kites and crows.

You may maintain that the evolution of humanity has been an unbroken progress towards perfection; you may maintain that there has been no progress at all, and that man remains the same poor creature that he ever was; or, lastly, you may say with the author of the *Contrat Social*, that men were purest and best in primeval simplicity—

> When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

In all, or any of these views, history will stand your friend. History, in its passive irony, will make no objection. Like Jarno, in Goethe's novel, it will not condescend to argue with you, and will provide you with abundant illustrations of anything which you may wish to believe.

"What is history," said Napoleon, "but a fiction agreed upon?" "My friend," said Faust to the student, who was growing enthusiastic about the spirit of past ages; "my friend, the times which are gone are a book with seven seals; and what you call the spirit of past

ages is but the spirit of this or that worthy gentleman in whose mind those ages are reflected."

One lesson, and only one, history may be said to repeat with distinctness; that the world is built somehow on moral foundations; that, in the long run, it is well with the good; in the long run, it is ill with the wicked. But this is no science; it is no more than the old doctrine taught long ago by the Hebrew prophets. The theories of M. Comte and his disciples advance us, after all, not a step beyond the trodden and familiar ground. If men are not entirely animals, they are at least half animals, and are subject in this aspect of them to the conditions of animals. So far as those parts of man's doings are concerned, which neither have, nor need have, anything moral about them, so far the laws of him are calculable. There are laws for his digestion, and laws of the means by which his digestive organs are supplied with matter. But pass beyond them, and where are we? In a world where it would be as easy to calculate men's actions by laws like those of positive philosophy as to measure the orbit of Neptune with a foot-rule, or weigh Sirius in a grocer's scale.

And it is not difficult to see why this should be. The first principle on which the theory of a science of history can be plausibly argued, is that all actions whatsoever arise from self-interest. It may be enlightened self-interest; it may be unenlightened; but it is assumed as an axiom, that every man, in whatever he does, is aiming at something which he considers will promote his happiness. His conduct is not determined by his will; it is determined by the object of his desire. Adam Smith, in laying the foundations of political economy, expressly eliminates every other motive. He does not say that men never act on other motives; still less, that they never ought to act on other motives. He asserts merely that, as far as the arts of production are concerned, and of buying and selling, the action of self-interest may be

counted upon as uniform. What Adam Smith says of political economy, Mr. Buckle would extend over the whole circle of human activity.

Now, that which especially distinguishes a high order of man from a low order of man—that which constitutes human goodness, human greatness, human nobleness—is surely not the degree of enlightenment with which men pursue their own advantage; but it is self-forgetfulness—it is self-sacrifice—it is the disregard of personal pleasure, personal indulgence, personal advantages remote or present, because some other line of conduct is more right.

We are sometimes told that this is but another way of expressing the same thing; that when a man prefers doing what is right, it is only because to do right gives him a higher satisfaction. It appears to me, on the contrary, to be a difference in the very heart and nature of things. The martyr goes to the stake, the patriot to the scaffold, not with a view to any future reward to themselves, but because it is a glory to fling away their lives for truth and freedom. And so through all phases of existence, to the smallest details of common life, the beautiful character is the unselfish character. Those whom we most love and admire are those to whom the thought of self seems never to occur; who do simply and with no ulterior aim—with no thought whether it will be pleasant to themselves or unpleasant—that which is good, and right, and generous.

Is this still selfishness, only more enlightened? I do not think so. The essence of true nobility is neglect of self. Let the thought of self pass in, and the beauty of a great action is gone—like the bloom from a soiled flower. Surely it is a paradox to speak of the self-interest of a martyr who dies for a cause, the triumph of which he will never enjoy; and the greatest of that great company in all ages would have done what they did, had their personal prospects closed with the grave. Nay, there have been those so zealous for some glorious

principle, as to wish themselves blotted out of the book of Heaven if the cause of Heaven could succeed.

And out of this mysterious quality, whatever it be, arise the higher relations of human life, the higher modes of human obligation. Kant, the philosopher, used to say that there were two things which overwhelmed him with awe as he thought of them. One was the star-sown deep of space, without limit and without end; the other was, right and wrong. Right, the sacrifice of self to good; wrong, the sacrifice of good to self;—not graduated objects of desire, to which we are determined by the degrees of our knowledge, but wide asunder as pole and pole, as light and darkness—one, the object of infinite love; the other, the object of infinite detestation and scorn. It is in this marvellous power in men to do wrong (it is an old story, but none the less true for that)—it is in this power to do wrong—wrong or right, as it lies somehow with ourselves to choose—that the impossibility stands of forming scientific calculations of what men will do before the fact, or scientific explanations of what they have done after the fact. If men were consistently selfish, you might analyse their motives; if they were consistently noble, they would express in their conduct the laws of the highest perfection. But so long as two natures are mixed together, and the strange creature which results from the combination is now under one influence and now under another, so long you will make nothing of him except from the old-fashioned moral—or, if you please, imaginative—point of view.

Even the laws of political economy itself cease to guide us when they touch moral government. So long as labour is a chattel to be bought and sold, so long, like other commodities, it follows the condition of supply and demand. But if, for his misfortune, an employer considers that he stands in human relations towards his workmen; if he believes, rightly or wrongly, that he is

responsible for them; that in return for their labour he is bound to see that their children are decently taught, and they and their families decently fed and clothed and lodged; that he ought to care for them in sickness and in old age; then political economy will no longer direct him, and the relations between himself and his dependents will have to be arranged on quite other principles.

So long as he considers only his own material profit, so long supply and demand will settle every difficulty; but the introduction of a new factor spoils the equation.

And it is precisely in this debatable ground of low motives and noble emotions—in the struggle, ever failing, yet ever renewed, to carry truth and justice into the administration of human society; in the establishment of states and in the overthrow of tyrannies; in the rise and fall of creeds; in the world of ideas; in the character and deeds of the great actors in the drama of life; where good and evil fight out their everlasting battle, now ranged in opposite camps, now and more often in the heart, both of them, of each living man—that the true human interest of history resides. The progress of industries, the growth of material and mechanical civilisation, are interesting, but they are not the most interesting. They have their reward in the increase of material comforts; but, unless we are mistaken about our nature, they do not highly concern us after all.

Once more; not only is there in men this baffling duality of principle, but there is something else in us which still more defies scientific analysis.

Mr. Buckle would deliver himself from the eccentricities of this and that individual by a doctrine of averages. Though he cannot tell whether A, B, or C will cut his throat, he may assure himself that one man in every fifty thousand, or thereabout (I forget the exact pro-

portion), will cut his throat, and with this he consoles himself. No doubt it is a comforting discovery. Unfortunately, the average of one generation need not be the average of the next. We may be converted by the Japanese, for all that we know, and the Japanese methods of taking leave of life may become fashionable among us. Nay, did not Novalis suggest that the whole race of men would at last become so disgusted with their impotence, that they would extinguish themselves by a simultaneous act of suicide, and make room for a better order of beings? Anyhow, the fountain out of which the race is flowing perpetually changes—no two generations are alike. Whether there is a change in the organisation itself, we cannot tell; but this is certain, that as the planet varies with the atmosphere which surrounds it, so each new generation varies from the last, because it inhales as its atmosphere the accumulated experience and knowledge of the whole past of the world. These things form the spiritual air which we breathe as we grow; and in the infinite multiplicity of elements of which that air is now composed, it is for ever matter of conjecture what the minds will be like which expand under its influence.

From the England of Fielding and Richardson to the England of Miss Austen—from the England of Miss Austen to the England of Railways and Free-trade, how vast the change; yet perhaps Sir Charles Grandison would not seem so strange to us now, as one of ourselves will seem to our great-grandchildren. The world moves faster and faster; and the difference will probably be considerably greater.

The temper of each new generation is a continual surprise. The fates delight to contradict our most confident expectations. Gibbon believed that the era of conquerors was at an end. Had he lived out the full life of man, he would have seen Europe at the feet of Napoleon. But a few years ago we believed the world

had grown too civilised for war, and the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park was to be the inauguration of a new era. Battles, bloody as Napoleon's, are now the familiar tale of every day; and the arts which have made greatest progress are the arts of destruction. What next? We may strain our eyes into the future which lies beyond this waning century; but never was conjecture more at fault. It is blank darkness, which even the imagination fails to people.

What then is the use of History? and what are its lessons? If it can tell us little of the past, and nothing of the future, why waste our time over so barren a study?

First, it is a voice for ever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong. Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for cruelty and oppression, for lust or vanity, the price has to be paid at last: not always by the chief offenders, but paid by some one. Justice and truth alone endure and live. Injustice and falsehood may be long-lived, but doomsday comes at last to them, in French revolutions and other terrible ways.

That is one lesson of History. Another is, that we should draw no horoscopes; that we should expect little, for what we expect will not come to pass. Revolutions, reformations—those vast movements into which heroes and saints have flung themselves, in the belief that they were the dawn of the millennium—have not borne the fruit which they looked for. Millenniums are still far away. These great convulsions leave the world changed—perhaps improved,—but not improved as the actors in them hoped it would be. Luther would have gone to work with less heart, could he have foreseen the Thirty Years' War, and in the distance the theology of Tubingen. Washington might have hesitated to draw

the sword against England, could he have seen the country which he made as we see it now.[1]

The most reasonable anticipations fail us—antecedents the most apposite mislead us; because the conditions of human problems never repeat themselves. Some new feature alters everything—some element which we detect only in its after-operation.

But this, it may be said, is but a meagre outcome. Can the long records of humanity, with all its joys and sorrows, its sufferings and its conquests, teach us no more than this? Let us approach the subject from another side.

If you were asked to point out the special features in which Shakespeare's plays are so transcendently excellent, you would mention, perhaps, among others, this, that his stories are not put together, and his characters are not conceived, to illustrate any particular law or principle. They teach many lessons, but not any one prominent above another; and when we have drawn from them all the direct instruction which they contain, there remains still something unresolved — something which the artist gives, and which the philosopher cannot give.

It is in this characteristic that we are accustomed to say Shakespeare's supreme *truth* lies. He represents real life. His dramas teach as life teaches—neither less nor more. He builds his fabrics as nature does, on right and wrong; but he does not struggle to make nature more systematic than she is. In the subtle interflow of good and evil—in the unmerited sufferings of innocence—in the disproportion of penalties to desert —in the seeming blindness with which justice, in attempting to assert itself, overwhelms innocent and guilty in a common ruin—Shakespeare is true to real experience. The mystery of life he leaves as he finds it; and, in his most tremendous positions, he is addressing rather the

[1] February 1864.

intellectual emotions than the understanding,—knowing well that the understanding in such things is at fault, and the sage as ignorant as the child.

Only the highest order of genius can represent nature thus. An inferior artist produces either something entirely immoral, where good and evil are names, and nobility of disposition is supposed to show itself in the absolute disregard of them—or else, if he is a better kind of man, he will force on nature a didactic purpose; he composes what are called moral tales, which may edify the conscience, but will only mislead the intellect.

The finest work of this kind produced in modern times is Lessing's play of *Nathan the Wise*. The object of it is to teach religious toleration. The doctrine is admirable—the mode in which it is enforced is interesting; but it has the fatal fault, that it is not true. Nature does not teach religious toleration by any such direct method; and the result is—no one knew it better than Lessing himself—that the play is not poetry but only splendid manufacture. Shakespeare is eternal; Lessing's *Nathan* will pass away with the mode of thought which gave it birth. One is based on fact; the other, on human theory about fact. The theory seems at first sight to contain the most immediate instruction; but it is not really so.

Cibber and others, as you know, wanted to alter Shakespeare. The French king, in *Lear*, was to be got rid of; Cordelia was to marry Edgar, and Lear himself was to be rewarded for his sufferings by a golden old age. They could not bear that Hamlet should suffer for the sins of Claudius. The wicked king was to die, and the wicked mother; and Hamlet and Ophelia were to make a match of it, and live happily ever after. A common novelist would have arranged it thus; and you would have had your comfortable moral that wickedness was fitly punished, and virtue had its due

reward, and all would have been well. But Shakespeare would not have it so. Shakespeare knew that crime was not so simple in its consequences, or Providence so paternal. He was contented to take the truth from life; and the effect upon the mind of the most correct theory of what life ought to be, compared to the effect of the life itself, is infinitesimal in comparison.

Again, let us compare the popular historical treatment of remarkable incidents with Shakespeare's treatment of them. Look at *Macbeth*. You may derive abundant instruction from it—instruction of many kinds. There is a moral lesson of profound interest in the steps by which a noble nature glides to perdition. In more modern fashion you may speculate, if you like, on the political conditions represented there, and the temptation presented in absolute monarchies to unscrupulous ambition; you may say, like Doctor Slop, these things could not have happened under a constitutional government; or, again, you may take up your parable against superstition—you may dilate on the frightful consequences of a belief in witches, and reflect on the superior advantages of an age of schools and newspapers. If the bare facts of the story had come down to us from a chronicler, and an ordinary writer of the nineteenth century had undertaken to relate them, his account, we may depend upon it, would have been put together upon one or other of these principles. Yet, by the side of that unfolding of the secrets of the prison-house of the soul, what lean and shrivelled anatomies the best of such descriptions would seem!

Shakespeare himself, I suppose, could not have given us a theory of what he meant—he gave us the thing itself, on which we might make whatever theories we pleased.

Or again, look at Homer.

The *Iliad* is from two to three thousand years older than *Macbeth*, and yet it is as fresh as if it had been

written yesterday. We have there no lessons save in the emotions which rise in us as we read. Homer had no philosophy; he never struggles to impress upon us his views about this or that; you can scarcely tell indeed whether his sympathies are Greek or Trojan; but he represents to us faithfully the men and women among whom he lived. He sang the Tale of Troy, he touched his lyre, he drained the golden beaker in the halls of men like those on whom he was conferring immortality. And thus, although no Agamemnon, king of men, ever led a Grecian fleet to Ilium; though no Priam sought the midnight tent of Achilles; though Ulysses and Diomed and Nestor were but names, and Helen but a dream, yet, through Homer's power of representing men and women, those old Greeks will still stand out from amidst the darkness of the ancient world with a sharpness of outline which belongs to no period of history except the most recent. For the mere hard purposes of history, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are the most effective books which ever were written. We see the Hall of Menelaus, we see the garden of Alcinous, we see Nausicaa among her maidens on the shore, we see the mellow monarch sitting with ivory sceptre in the Market-place dealing out genial justice. Or again, when the wild mood is on, we can hear the crash of the spears, the rattle of the armour as the heroes fall, and the plunging of the horses among the slain. Could we enter the palace of an old Ionian lord, we know what we should see there; we know the words in which he would address us. We could meet Hector as a friend. If we could choose a companion to spend an evening with over a fireside, it would be the man of many counsels, the husband of Penelope.

I am not going into the vexed question whether History or Poetry is the more true. It has been sometimes said that Poetry is the more true, because it can make things more like what our moral sense would

prefer they should be. We hear of poetic justice and the like, as if nature and fact were not just enough.

I entirely dissent from that view. So far as Poetry attempts to improve on truth in that way, so far it abandons truth, and is false to itself. Even literal facts, exactly as they were, a great poet will prefer whenever he can get them. Shakespeare in the historical plays is studious, wherever possible, to give the very words which he finds to have been used; and it shows how wisely he was guided in this, that those magnificent speeches of Wolsey are taken exactly, with no more change than the metre makes necessary, from Cavendish's Life. Marlborough read Shakespeare for English history, and read nothing else. The poet only is not bound, when it is inconvenient, to what may be called the accidents of facts. It was enough for Shakespeare to know that Prince Hal in his youth had lived among loose companions, and the tavern in Eastcheap came in to fill out his picture; although Mrs. Quickly and Falstaff, and Poins and Bardolph were more likely to have been fallen in with by Shakespeare himself at the Mermaid, than to have been comrades of the true Prince Henry. It was enough for Shakespeare to draw real men, and the situation, whatever it might be, would sit easy on them. In this sense only it is that Poetry is truer than History, that it can make a picture more complete. It may take liberties with time and space, and give the action distinctness by throwing it into more manageable compass.

But it may not alter the real conditions of things, or represent life as other than it is. The greatness of the poet depends on his being true to nature, without insisting that nature shall theorise with him, without making her more just, more philosophical, more moral than reality; and, in difficult matters, leaving much to reflection which cannot be explained.

And if this be true of Poetry—if Homer and Shake-

speare are what they are, from the absence of everything didactic about them—may we not thus learn something of what History should be, and in what sense it should aspire to teach?

If Poetry must not theorise, much less should the historian theorise, whose obligations to be true to fact are even greater than the poet's. If the drama is grandest when the action is least explicable by laws, because then it best resembles life, then history will be grandest also under the same conditions. *Macbeth*, were it literally true, would be perfect history; and so far as the historian can approach to that kind of model, so far as he can let his story tell itself in the deeds and words of those who act it out, so far is he most successful. His work is no longer the vapour of his own brain, which a breath will scatter; it is the thing itself, which will have interest for all time. A thousand theories may be formed about it—spiritual theories, Pantheistic theories, cause and effect theories; but each age will have its own philosophy of history, and all these in turn will fail and die. Hegel falls out of date, Schlegel falls out of date, and Comte in good time will fall out of date; the thought about the thing must change as we change; but the thing itself can never change; and a history is durable or perishable as it contains more or least of the writer's own speculations. The splendid intellect of Gibbon for the most part kept him true to the right course in this; yet the philosophical chapters for which he has been most admired or censured may hereafter be thought the least interesting in his work. The time has been when they would not have been comprehended: the time may come when they will seem commonplace.

It may be said, that in requiring history to be written like a drama, we require an impossibility.

For history to be written with the complete form of a drama, doubtless is impossible; but there are periods,

and these the periods, for the most part, of greatest interest to mankind, the history of which may be so written that the actors shall reveal their characters in their own words; where mind can be seen matched against mind, and the great passions of the epoch not simply be described as existing, but be exhibited at their white heat in the souls and hearts possessed by them. There are all the elements of drama—drama of the highest order—where the huge forces of the times are as the Grecian destiny, and the power of the man is seen either stemming the stream till it overwhelms him, or ruling while he seems to yield to it.

It is Nature's drama — not Shakespeare's — but a drama none the less.

So at least it seems to me. Wherever possible, let us not be told *about* this man or that. Let us hear the man himself speak; let us see him act, and let us be left to form our own opinions about him. The historian, we are told, must not leave his readers to themselves. He must not only lay the facts before them—he must tell them what he himself thinks about those facts. In my opinion, this is precisely what he ought not to do.

Bishop Butler says somewhere, that the best book which could be written would be a book consisting only of premises, from which the readers should draw conclusions for themselves. The highest poetry is the very thing which Butler requires, and the highest history ought to be. We should no more ask for a theory of this or that period of history, than we should ask for a theory of *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*. Philosophies of history, sciences of history—all these, there will continue to be; the fashions of them will change, as our habits of thought will change; each new philosopher will find his chief employment in showing that before him no one understood anything; but the drama of history is imperishable, and the lessons of it will be like

what we learn from Homer or Shakespeare—lessons for which we have no words.

The address of history is less to the understanding than to the higher emotions. We learn in it to sympathise with what is great and good; we learn to hate what is base. In the anomalies of fortune we feel the mystery of our mortal existence, and in the companionship of the illustrious natures who have shaped the fortunes of the world, we escape from the littlenesses which cling to the round of common life, and our minds are tuned in a higher and nobler key.

For the rest, and for those large questions which I touched in connection with Mr. Buckle, we live in times of disintegration, and none can tell what will be after us. What opinions—what convictions—the infant of to-day will find prevailing on the earth, if he and it live out together to the middle of another century, only a very bold man would undertake to conjecture! "The time will come," said Lichtenberg, in scorn at the materialising tendencies of modern thought; "the time will come when the belief in God will be as the tales with which old women frighten children; when the world will be a machine, the ether a gas, and God will be a force."

Mankind, if they last long enough on the earth, may develop strange things out of themselves; and the growth of what is called the Positive Philosophy is a curious commentary on Lichtenberg's prophecy. But whether the end be seventy years hence, or seven hundred—be the close of the mortal history of humanity as far distant in the future as its shadowy beginnings seem now to lie behind us—this only we may foretell with confidence—that the riddle of man's nature will remain unsolved. There will be that in him yet which physical laws will fail to explain—that something, whatever it be, in himself and in the world, which science cannot fathom, and which suggests the unknown

possibilities of his origin and his destiny. There will remain yet

> Those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things;
> Falling from us, vanishings—
> Blank misgivings of a creature
> Moving about in worlds not realised—
> High instincts, before which our mortal nature
> Doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised.

There will remain

> Those first affections—
> Those shadowy recollections—
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain-light of all our day—
> Are yet the master-light of all our seeing—
> Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the Eternal Silence.

TIMES OF ERASMUS AND LUTHER

THREE LECTURES DELIVERED AT NEWCASTLE, 1867

LECTURE I

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I do not know whether I have made a very wise selection in the subject which I have chosen for these Lectures. There was a time—a time which, measured by the years of our national life, was not so very long ago—when the serious thoughts of mankind were occupied exclusively by religion and politics. The small knowledge which they possessed of other things was tinctured by their speculative opinions on the relations of heaven and earth; and, down to the sixteenth century, art, science, scarcely even literature, existed in this country, except as, in some way or other, subordinate to theology. Philosophers—such philosophers as there were—obtained and half deserved the reputation of quacks and conjurors. Astronomy was confused with astrology. The physician's medicines were supposed to be powerless, unless the priests said prayers over them. The great lawyers, the ambassadors, the chief ministers of state, were generally bishops; even the fighting business was not entirely secular. Half-a-dozen Scotch prelates were killed at Flodden; and, late in the reign of Henry the Eighth, no fitter person could be found than Rowland Lee, Bishop of Coventry, to take command of the Welsh Marches, and harry the freebooters of Llangollen.

Every single department of intellectual or practical life was penetrated with the beliefs, or was interwoven with the interest, of the clergy; and thus it was that, when differences of religious opinion arose,

they split society to its foundations. The lines of cleavage penetrated everywhere, and there were no subjects whatever in which those who disagreed in theology possessed any common concern. When men quarrelled, they quarrelled altogether. The disturbers of settled beliefs were regarded as public enemies who had placed themselves beyond the pale of humanity, and were considered fit only to be destroyed like wild beasts, or trampled out like the seed of a contagion.

Three centuries have passed over our heads since the time of which I am speaking, and the world is so changed that we can hardly recognise it as the same.

The secrets of nature have been opened out to us on a thousand lines; and men of science of all creeds can pursue side by side their common investigations. Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Calvinists, contend with each other in honourable rivalry in arts, and literature, and commerce, and industry. They read the same books. They study at the same academies. They have seats in the same senates. They preside together on the judicial bench, and carry on, without jar or difference, the ordinary business of the country.

Those who share the same pursuits are drawn in spite of themselves into sympathy and good-will. When they are in harmony in so large a part of their occupations, the points of remaining difference lose their venom. Those who thought they hated each other, unconsciously find themselves friends; and as far as it affects the world at large, the acrimony of controversy has almost disappeared.

Imagine, if you can, a person being now put to death for a speculative theological opinion. You feel at once, that in the most bigoted country in the world such a thing has become impossible; and the impossibility is the measure of the alteration which we have all undergone. The formulas remain as they were on either side

—the very same formulas which were once supposed to require these detestable murders. But we have learnt to know each other better. The cords which bind together the brotherhood of mankind are woven of a thousand strands. We do not any more fly apart or become enemies, because, here and there, in one strand out of so many, there are still unsound places.

If I were asked for a distinct proof that Europe was improving and not retrograding, I should find it in this phenomenon. It has not been brought about by controversy. Men are fighting still over the same questions which they began to fight about at the Reformation. Protestant divines have not driven Catholics out of the field, nor Catholics, Protestants. Each polemic writes for his own partisans, and makes no impression on his adversary.

Controversy has kept alive a certain quantity of bitterness; and that, I suspect, is all that it would accomplish if it continued till the day of judgment. I sometimes, in impatient moments, wish the laity in Europe would treat their controversial divines as two gentlemen once treated their seconds, when they found themselves forced into a duel without knowing what they were quarrelling about.

As the principals were being led up to their places, one of them whispered to the other, "If you will shoot your second, I will shoot mine."

The reconciliation of parties, if I may use such a word, is no tinkered-up truce, or convenient Interim. It is the healthy, silent, spontaneous growth of a nobler order of conviction, which has conquered our prejudices even before we knew that they were assailed. This better spirit especially is represented in institutions like this, which acknowledge no differences of creed—which are constructed on the broadest principles of toleration —and which, therefore, as a rule, are wisely protected from the intrusion of discordant subjects.

They exist, as I understand, to draw men together, not to divide them—to enable us to share together in those topics of universal interest and instruction which all can take pleasure in, and which give offence to none.

If you ask me, then, why I am myself departing from a practice which I admit to be so excellent, I fear that I shall give you rather a lame answer. I might say that I know more about the history of the sixteenth century than I know about anything else. I have spent the best years of my life in reading and writing about it; and if I have anything to tell you worth your hearing, it is probably on that subject.

Or, again, I might say—which is indeed most true—that to the Reformation we can trace, indirectly, the best of those very influences which I have been describing. The Reformation broke the theological shackles in which men's minds were fettered. It set them thinking, and so gave birth to science. The Reformers also, without knowing what they were about, taught the lesson of religious toleration. They attempted to supersede one set of dogmas by another. They succeeded with half the world—they failed with the other half. In a little while it became apparent that good men—without ceasing to be good—could think differently about theology, and that goodness, therefore, depended on something else than the holding orthodox opinions.

It is not, however, for either of these reasons that I am going to talk to you about Martin Luther; nor is toleration of differences of opinion, however excellent it be, the point on which I shall dwell in these Lectures.

Were the Reformation a question merely of opinion, I for one should not have meddled with it, either here or anywhere. I hold that, on the obscure mysteries of faith, every one should be allowed to believe according to his conscience, and that arguments on such matters are either impertinent or useless.

But the Reformation, gentlemen, beyond the region of opinions, was a historical fact—an objective something which may be studied like any of the facts of nature. The Reformers were men of note and distinction, who played a great part for good or evil on the stage of the world. If we except the Apostles, no body of human beings ever printed so deep a mark into the organisation of society; and if there be any value or meaning in history at all, the lives, the actions, the characters of such men as these can be matters of indifference to none of us.

We have not to do with a story which is buried in obscure antiquity. The facts admit of being learnt. The truth, whatever it was, concerns us all equally. If the divisions created by that great convulsion are ever to be obliterated, it will be when we have learnt, each of us, to see the thing as it really was, and not rather some mythical or imaginative version of the thing—such as from our own point of view we like to think it was. Fiction in such matters may be convenient for our immediate theories, but it is certain to avenge itself in the end. We may make our own opinions, but facts were made for us; and if we evade or deny them, it will be the worse for us.

Unfortunately, the mythical version at present very largely preponderates. Open a Protestant history of the Reformation, and you find a picture of the world given over to a lying tyranny—the Christian population of Europe enslaved by a corrupt and degraded priesthood, and the Reformers, with the Bible in their hands, coming to the rescue like angels of light. All is black on one side—all is fair and beautiful on the other.

Turn to a Catholic history of the same events and the same men, and we have before us the Church of the Saints fulfilling quietly its blessed mission in the saving of human souls. Satan a second time enters into Paradise, and a second time with fatal success tempts

miserable man to his ruin. He disbelieves his appointed teachers, he aspires after forbidden knowledge, and at once anarchy breaks loose. The seamless robe of the Saviour is rent in pieces, and the earth becomes the habitation of fiends.

Each side tells the story as it prefers to have it; facts, characters, circumstances, are melted in the theological crucible, and cast in moulds diametrically opposite. Nothing remains the same except the names and dates. Each side chooses its own witnesses. Everything is credible which makes for what it calls the truth. Everything is made false which will not fit into its place. "Blasphemous fables" is the usual expression in Protestant controversial books for the accounts given by Catholics. "Protestant tradition," says an eminent modern Catholic, "is based on lying—bold, wholesale, unscrupulous lying."

Now, depend upon it, there is some human account of the matter different from both these if we could only get at it, and it will be an excellent thing for the world when that human account can be made out. I am not so presumptuous as to suppose that I can give it to you; still less can you expect me to try to do so within the compass of two or three lectures. If I cannot do everything, however, I believe I can do a little; at any rate I can give you a sketch, such as you may place moderate confidence in, of the state of the Church as it was before the Reformation began. I will not expose myself more than I can help to the censure of the divine who was so hard on Protestant tradition. Most of what I shall have to say to you this evening will be taken from the admissions of Catholics themselves, or from official records earlier than the outbreak of the controversy, when there was no temptation to pervert the truth.

Here, obviously, is the first point on which we require accurate information. If all was going on well, the Reformers really and truly told innumerable lies, and

deserve all the reprobation which we can give them. If all was not going on well—if, so far from being well, the Church was so corrupt that Europe could bear with it no longer—then clearly a Reformation was necessary of some kind; and we have taken one step towards a fair estimate of the persons concerned in it.

A fair estimate—that, and only that, is what we want. I need hardly observe to you, that opinion in England has been undergoing lately a very considerable alteration about these persons.

Two generations ago, the leading Reformers were looked upon as little less than saints; now a party has risen up who intend, as they frankly tell us, to un-Protestantise the Church of England, who detest Protestantism as a kind of infidelity, who desire simply to reverse everything which the Reformers did.

One of these gentlemen, a clergyman, writing lately of Luther, called him a heretic, a heretic fit only to be ranked with—whom do you think?—Joe Smith, the Mormon Prophet. Joe Smith and Luther—that is the combination with which we are now presented.

The book in which this remarkable statement appeared was presented by two bishops to the Upper House of Convocation. It was received with gracious acknowledgments by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and was placed solemnly in the library of reference, for that learned body to consult.

So, too, a professor at Oxford, the other day, spoke of Luther as a Philistine—a Philistine meaning an oppressor of the chosen people; the enemy of men of culture, of intelligence, such as the professor himself.

One notices these things, not as of much importance in themselves, but as showing which way the stream is running: and, curiously enough, in quite another direction we may see the same phenomenon. Our liberal philosophers, men of high literary power and reputation, looking into the history of Luther, and

Calvin, and John Knox, and the rest, find them falling far short of the philosophic ideal—wanting sadly in many qualities which the liberal mind cannot dispense with. They are discovered to be intolerant, dogmatic, narrow-minded, inclined to persecute Catholics as Catholics had persecuted them; to be, in fact, little if at all better than the popes and cardinals whom they were fighting against.

Lord Macaulay can hardly find epithets strong enough to express his contempt for Archbishop Cranmer. Mr. Buckle places Cranmer by the side of Bonner, and hesitates which of the two characters is the more detestable.

An unfavourable estimate of the Reformers, whether just or unjust, is unquestionably gaining ground among our advanced thinkers. A greater man than either Macaulay or Buckle—the German poet, Goethe—says of Luther, that he threw back the intellectual progress of mankind for centuries, by calling in the passions of the multitude to decide on subjects which ought to have been left to the learned. Goethe, in saying this, was alluding especially to Erasmus. Goethe thought that Erasmus, and men like Erasmus, had struck upon the right track; and if they could have retained the direction of the mind of Europe, there would have been more truth, and less falsehood, among us at this present time. The party hatreds, the theological rivalries, the persecutions, the civil wars, the religious animosities which have so long distracted us, would have been all avoided, and the mind of mankind would have expanded gradually and equably with the growth of knowledge.

Such an opinion, coming from so great a man, is not to be lightly passed over. It will be my endeavour to show you what kind of man Erasmus was, what he was aiming at, what he was doing, and how Luther spoilt his work—if spoiling is the word which we are to use for it.

One caution, however, I must in fairness give you

before we proceed further. It lies upon the face of the story, that the Reformers imperfectly understood toleration; but you must keep before you the spirit and temper of the men with whom they had to deal. For themselves, when the movement began, they aimed at nothing but liberty to think and speak their own way. They never dreamt of interfering with others, although they were quite aware that others, when they could, were likely to interfere with them. Lord Macaulay might have remembered that Cranmer was working all his life with the prospect of being burnt alive as his reward—and, as we all know, he actually was burnt alive.

When the Protestant teaching began first to spread in the Netherlands—before one single Catholic had been ill-treated there, before a symptom of a mutinous disposition had shown itself among the people, an edict was issued by the authorities for the suppression of the new opinions.

The terms of this edict I will briefly describe to you.

The inhabitants of the United Provinces were informed that they were to hold and believe the doctrines of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. "Men and women," says the edict, "who disobey this command shall be punished as disturbers of public order. Women who have fallen into heresy shall be buried alive. Men, if they recant, shall lose their heads. If they continue obstinate, they shall be burnt at the stake.

"If man or woman be suspected of heresy, no one shall shelter or protect him or her; and no stranger shall be admitted to lodge in any inn or dwelling-house unless he bring with him a testimonial of orthodoxy from the priest of his parish.

"The Inquisition shall enquire into the private opinions of every person, of whatever degree; and all officers of all kinds shall assist the Inquisition at their peril. Those who know where heretics are concealed, shall denounce

them, or they shall suffer as heretics themselves. Heretics (observe the malignity of this paragraph)—heretics who will give up other heretics to justice, shall themselves be pardoned if they will promise to conform for the future."

Under this edict, in the Netherlands alone, more than fifty thousand human beings, first and last, were deliberately murdered. And, gentlemen, I must say that proceedings of this kind explain and go far to excuse the subsequent intolerance of Protestants.

Intolerance, Mr. Gibbon tells us, is a greater crime in a Protestant than a Catholic. Criminal intolerance, as I understand it, is the intolerance of such an edict as that which I have read to you—the unprovoked intolerance of difference of opinion. I conceive that the most enlightened philosopher might have grown hard and narrow-minded if he had suffered under the administration of the Duke of Alva.

Dismissing these considerations, I will now go on with my subject.

Never in all their history, in ancient times or modern, never that we know of, have mankind thrown out of themselves anything so grand, so useful, so beautiful, as the Catholic Church once was. In these times of ours, well-regulated selfishness is the recognised rule of action—every one of us is expected to look out first for himself, and take care of his own interests. At the time I speak of, the Church ruled the State with the authority of a conscience; and self-interest, as a motive of action, was only named to be abhorred. The bishops and clergy were regarded freely and simply as the immediate ministers of the Almighty; and they seem to me to have really deserved that high estimate of their character. It was not for the doctrines which they taught, only or chiefly, that they were held in honour. Brave men do not fall down before their fellow-mortals for the words which they speak, or for the rites which

they perform. Wisdom, justice, self-denial, nobleness, purity, highmindedness,—these are the qualities before which the free-born races of Europe have been contented to bow; and in no order of men were such qualities to be found as they were found six hundred years ago in the clergy of the Catholic Church. They called themselves the successors of the Apostles. They claimed in their Master's name universal spiritual authority, but they made good their pretensions by the holiness of their own lives. They were allowed to rule because they deserved to rule, and in the fulness of reverence kings and nobles bent before a power which was nearer to God than their own. Over prince and subject, chieftain and serf, a body of unarmed defenceless men reigned supreme by the magic of sanctity. They tamed the fiery northern warriors who had broken in pieces the Roman Empire. They taught them—they brought them really and truly to believe—that they had immortal souls, and that they would one day stand at the awful judgment bar and give account for their lives there. With the brave, the honest, and the good—with those who had not oppressed the poor nor removed their neighbour's landmark—with those who had been just in all their dealings—with those who had fought against evil, and had tried valiantly to do their Master's will,—at that great day, it would be well. For cowards, for profligates, for those who lived for luxury and pleasure and self-indulgence, there was the blackness of eternal death.

An awful conviction of this tremendous kind the clergy had effectually instilled into the mind of Europe. It was not a PERHAPS; it was a certainty. It was not a form of words repeated once a week at church; it was an assurance entertained on all days and in all places, without any particle of doubt. And the effect of such a belief on life and conscience was simply immeasurable.

I do not pretend that the clergy were perfect. They

were very far from perfect at the best of times, and the European nations were never completely submissive to them. It would not have been well if they had been. The business of human creatures in this planet is not summed up in the most excellent of priestly catechisms. The world and its concerns continued to interest men, though priests insisted on their nothingness. They could not prevent kings from quarrelling with each other. They could not hinder disputed successions, and civil feuds, and wars, and political conspiracies. What they did do was to shelter the weak from the strong. In the eyes of the clergy, the serf and his lord stood on the common level of sinful humanity. Into their ranks high birth was no passport. They were themselves for the most part children of the people; and the son of the artisan or peasant rose to the mitre and the triple crown, just as nowadays the rail-splitter and the tailor become Presidents of the Republic of the West.

The Church was essentially democratic, while at the same time it had the monopoly of learning; and all the secular power fell to it which learning, combined with sanctity and assisted by superstition, can bestow.

The privileges of the clergy were extraordinary. They were not amenable to the common laws of the land. While they governed the laity, the laity had no power over them. From the throne downwards, every secular office was dependent on the Church. No king was a lawful sovereign till the Church placed the crown upon his head: and what the Church bestowed, the Church claimed the right to take away. The disposition of property was in their hands. No will could be proved except before the bishop or his officer; and no will was held valid if the testator died out of communion. There were magistrates and courts of law for the offences of the laity. If a priest committed a crime, he was a sacred person. The civil power could not touch him;

he was reserved for his ordinary. Bishops' commissaries sate in town and city, taking cognizance of the moral conduct of every man and woman. Offences against life and property were tried here in England, as now, by the common law; but the Church Court dealt with sins—sins of word or act. If a man was a profligate or a drunkard; if he lied or swore; if he did not come to communion, or held unlawful opinions; if he was idle or unthrifty; if he was unkind to his wife or his servants; if a child was disobedient to his father, or a father cruel to his child; if a tradesman sold adulterated wares, or used false measures or dishonest weights,—the eye of the parish priest was everywhere, and the Church Court stood always open to examine and to punish.

Imagine what a tremendous power this must have been! Yet it existed generally in Catholic Europe down to the eve of the Reformation. It could never have established itself at all unless at one time it had worked beneficially—as the abuse of it was one of the most fatal causes of the Church's fall.

I know nothing in English history much more striking than the answer given by Archbishop Warham to the complaints of the English House of Commons after the fall of Cardinal Wolsey. The House of Commons complained that the clergy made laws in Convocation which the laity were excommunicated if they disobeyed. Yet the laws made by the clergy, the Commons said, were often at variance with the laws of the realm.

What did Warham reply? He said he was sorry for the alleged discrepancy; but, inasmuch as the laws made by the clergy were always in conformity with the will of God, the laws of the realm had only to be altered and then the difficulty would vanish.

What must have been the position of the clergy in the fulness of their power, when they could speak thus on the eve of their prostration? You have only to look from a distance at any old-fashioned cathedral city,

and you will see in a moment the mediæval relations between Church and State. The cathedral *is* the city. The first object you catch sight of as you approach is the spire tapering into the sky, or the huge towers holding possession of the centre of the landscape—majestically beautiful—imposing by mere size amidst the large forms of Nature herself. As you go nearer, the vastness of the building impresses you more and more. The puny dwelling-places of the citizens creep at its feet, the pinnacles are glittering in the tints of the sunset, when down below among the streets and lanes the twilight is darkening. And even now, when the towns are thrice their ancient size, and the houses have stretched upwards from two stories to five; when the great chimneys are vomiting their smoke among the clouds, and the temples of modern industry—the workshops and the factories—spread their long fronts before the eye, the cathedral is still the governing form in the picture—the one object which possesses the imagination and refuses to be eclipsed.

As that cathedral was to the old town, so was the Church of the middle ages to the secular institutions of the world. Its very neighbourhood was sacred; and its shadow, like the shadow of the Apostles, was a sanctuary. When I look at the new Houses of Parliament in London, I see in them a type of the change which has passed over us. The House of Commons of the Plantagenets sate in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey. The Parliament of the Reform Bill, five-and-thirty years ago, debated in St. Stephen's Chapel, the Abbey's small dependency. Now, by the side of the enormous pile which has risen out of that chapel's ashes, the proud Minster itself is dwarfed into insignificance.

Let us turn to another vast feature of the middle ages—I mean the monasteries.

Some person of especial and exceptional holiness has lived or died at a particular spot. He has been

distinguished by his wisdom, by his piety, by his active benevolence; and in an age when conjurors and witches were supposed to be helped by the devil to do evil, he, on his part, has been thought to have possessed in larger measure than common men the favour and the grace of heaven. Blessed influences hang about the spot which he has hallowed by his presence. His relics—his household possessions, his books, his clothes, his bones, retain the shadowy sanctity which they received in having once belonged to him. We all set a value, not wholly unreal, on anything which has been the property of a remarkable man. At worst, it is but an exaggeration of natural reverence.

Well, as nowadays we build monuments to great men, so in the middle ages they built shrines or chapels on the spots which saints had made holy, and communities of pious people gathered together there—beginning with the personal friends the saint had left behind him—to try to live as he had lived, to do good as he had done good, and to die as he had died. Thus arose religious fraternities—companies of men who desired to devote themselves to goodness—to give up pleasure, and amusement, and self-indulgence, and to spend their lives in prayer and works of charity.

These houses became centres of pious beneficence. The monks, as the brotherhoods were called, were organised in different orders, with some variety of rule, but the broad principle was the same in all. They were to live for others, not for themselves. They took vows of poverty, that they might not be entangled in the pursuit of money. They took vows of chastity, that the care of a family might not distract them from the work which they had undertaken. Their efforts of charity were not limited to this world. Their days were spent in hard bodily labour, in study, or in visiting the sick. At night they were on the stone-floors of their chapels, holding up their withered hands to heaven,

interceding for the poor souls who were suffering in purgatory.

The world, as it always will, paid honour to exceptional excellence. The system spread to the furthest limits of Christendom. The religious houses became places of refuge, where men of noble birth, kings and queens and emperors, warriors and statesmen, retired to lay down their splendid cares, and end their days in peace. Those with whom the world had dealt hardly, or those whom it had surfeited with its unsatisfying pleasures, those who were disappointed with earth, and those who were filled with passionate aspirations after heaven, alike found a haven of rest in the quiet cloister. And, gradually, lands came to them, and wealth, and social dignity—all gratefully extended to men who deserved so well of their fellows; while no landlords were more popular than they, for the sanctity of the monks sheltered their dependents as well as themselves.

Travel now through Ireland, and you will see in the wildest parts of it innumerable remains of religious houses, which had grown up among a people who acknowledged no rule among themselves except the sword, and where every chief made war upon his neighbour as the humour seized him. The monks among the O's and the Mac's were as defenceless as sheep among the wolves; but the wolves spared them for their character. In such a country as Ireland then was, the monasteries could not have survived for a generation but for the enchanted atmosphere which surrounded them.

Of authority, the religious orders were practically independent. They were amenable only to the Pope and to their own superiors. Here in England, the king could not send a commissioner to inspect a monastery, nor even send a policeman to arrest a criminal who had taken shelter within its walls. Archbishops and bishops, powerful as they were, found

their authority cease when they entered the gates of a Benedictine or Dominican abbey.

So utterly have times changed, that with your utmost exertions you will hardly be able to picture to yourselves the Catholic Church in the days of its greatness. Our school-books tell us how the Emperor of Germany held the stirrup for Pope Gregory the Seventh to mount his mule; how our own English Henry Plantagenet walked barefoot through the streets of Canterbury, and knelt in the Chapter House for the monks to flog him. The first of these incidents, I was brought up to believe, proved the Pope to be the Man of Sin. Anyhow, they are both facts, and not romances; and you may form some notion from them how high in the world's eyes the Church must have stood.

And be sure it did not achieve that proud position without deserving it. The Teutonic and Latin princes were not credulous fools; and when they submitted, it was to something stronger than themselves—stronger in limb and muscle, or stronger in intellect and character.

So the Church was in its vigour: so the Church was *not* at the opening of the sixteenth century. Power—wealth—security—men are more than mortal if they can resist the temptations to which too much of these expose them. Nor were they the only enemies which undermined the energies of the Catholic clergy. Churches exist in this world to remind us of the eternal laws which we are bound to obey. So far as they do this, they fulfil their end, and are honoured in fulfilling it. It would have been better for all of us—it would be better for us now, could Churches keep this their peculiar function steadily and singly before them. Unfortunately, they have preferred in later times the speculative side of things to the practical. They take up into their teaching opinions and theories which are merely ephemeral; which would naturally die out with the progress of knowledge; but, having received a

spurious sanctity, prolong their days unseasonably, and become first unmeaning, and then occasions of superstition.

It matters little whether I say a paternoster in English or Latin, so that what is present to my mind is the thought which the words express, and not the words themselves. In these and all languages it is the most beautiful of prayers. But you know that people came to look on a Latin paternoster as the most powerful of spells—potent in heaven, if said straight forward; if repeated backward, a charm which no spirit in hell could resist.

So it is, in my opinion, with all forms—forms of words, or forms of ceremony and ritualism. While the meaning is alive in them, they are not only harmless, but pregnant and life-giving. When we come to think that they possess in themselves material and magical virtues, then the purpose which they answer is to hide God from us and make us practically into Atheists.

This is what I believe to have gradually fallen upon the Catholic Church in the generations which preceded Luther. The body remained; the mind was gone away: the original thought which its symbolism represented was no longer credible to intelligent persons.

The acute were conscious unbelievers. In Italy, when men went to mass they spoke of it as going to a comedy. You may have heard the story of Luther in his younger days saying mass at an altar in Rome, and hearing his fellow-priests muttering at the consecration of the Eucharist, "Bread thou art, and bread thou wilt remain."

Part of the clergy were profane scoundrels like these; the rest repeated the words of the service, conceiving that they were working a charm. Religion was passing through the transformation which all religions have a tendency to undergo. They cease to be aids and incentives to holy life; they become contrivances rather

to enable men to sin, and escape the penalties of sin. Obedience to the law is dispensed with if men will diligently profess certain opinions, or punctually perform certain external duties. However scandalous the moral life, the participation of a particular rite, or the profession of a particular belief, at the moment of death, is held to clear the score.

The powers which had been given to the clergy required for their exercise the highest wisdom and the highest probity. They had fallen at last into the hands of men who possessed considerably less of these qualities than the laity whom they undertook to govern. They had degraded their conceptions of God; and, as a necessary consequence, they had degraded their conceptions of man and man's duty. The aspirations after sanctity had disappeared, and instead of them there remained the practical reality of the five senses. The high prelates, the cardinals, the great abbots, were occupied chiefly in maintaining their splendour and luxury. The friars and the secular clergy, following their superiors with shorter steps, indulged themselves in grosser pleasures; while their spiritual powers, their supposed authority in this world and the next, were turned to account to obtain from the laity the means for their self-indulgence.

The Church forbade the eating of meat on fast days, but the Church was ready with dispensations for those who could afford to pay for them. The Church forbade marriage to the fourth degree of consanguinity, but loving cousins, if they were rich and open-handed, could obtain the Church's consent to their union. There were toll-gates for the priests at every halting-place on the road of life—fees at weddings, fees at funerals, fees whenever an excuse could be found to fasten them. Even when a man was dead he was not safe from plunder, for a mortuary or death present was exacted of his family.

And then those Bishops' Courts, of which I spoke just now: they were founded for the discipline of morality—they were made the instruments of the most detestable extortion. If an impatient layman spoke a disrespectful word of the clergy, he was cited before the bishop's commissary and fined. If he refused to pay, he was excommunicated, and excommunication was a poisonous disease. When a poor wretch was under the ban of the Church no tradesman might sell him clothes or food—no friend might relieve him—no human voice might address him, under pain of the same sentence; and if he died unreconciled, he died like a dog, without the sacraments, and was refused Christian burial.

The records of some of these courts survive: a glance at their pages will show the principles on which they were worked. When a layman offended, the single object was to make him pay for it. The magistrates could not protect him. If he resisted, and his friends supported him, so much the better, for they were now all in the scrape together. The next step would be to indict them in a body for heresy; and then, of course, there was nothing for it but to give way, and compound for absolution by money.

It was money—ever money. Even in case of real delinquency, it was still money. Money, not charity, covered the multitude of sins.

I have told you that the clergy were exempt from secular jurisdiction. They claimed to be amenable only to spiritual judges, and they extended the broad fringe of their order till the word clerk was construed to mean any one who could write his name or read a sentence from a book. A robber or a murderer at the assizes had but to show that he possessed either of these qualifications, and he was allowed what was called benefit of clergy. His case was transferred to the Bishops' Court, to an easy judge, who allowed him at once to compound.

Such were the clergy in matters of this world. As religious instructors, they appear in colours if possible less attractive.

Practical religion throughout Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century was a very simple affair. I am not going to speak of the mysterious doctrines of the Catholic Church. The creed which it professed in its schools and theological treatises was the same which it professes now, and which it had professed at the time when it was most powerful for good. I do not myself consider that the formulas in which men express their belief are of much consequence. The question is rather of the thing expressed; and so long as we find a living consciousness that above the world and above human life there is a righteous God, who will judge men according to their works, whether they say their prayers in Latin or English, whether they call themselves Protestants or call themselves Catholics, appears to me of quite secondary importance. But at the time I speak of, that consciousness no longer existed. The formulas and ceremonies were all in all; and of God it is hard to say what conceptions men had formed, when they believed that a dead man's relations could buy him out of purgatory—buy him out of purgatory,—for this was the literal truth—by hiring priests to sing masses for his soul.

Religion, in the minds of ordinary people, meant that the keys of the other world were held by the clergy. If a man confessed regularly to his priest, received the sacrament, and was absolved, then all was well with him. His duties consisted in going to confession and to mass. If he committed sins, he was prescribed penances, which could be commuted for money. If he was sick or ill at ease in his mind, he was recommended a pilgrimage—a pilgrimage to a shrine or a holy well, or to some wonder-working image—where, for due consideration, his case would be attended to. It was no use to go to a saint

empty-handed. The rule of the Church was, nothing for nothing. At a chapel in Saxony there was an image of a Virgin and Child. If the worshipper came to it with a good handsome offering, the child bowed and was gracious: if the present was unsatisfactory, it turned away its head, and withheld its favours till the purse-strings were untied again.

There was a great rood or crucifix of the same kind at Boxley, in Kent, where the pilgrims went in thousands. This figure used to bow, too, when it was pleased; and a good sum of money was sure to secure its good-will.

When the Reformation came, and the police looked into the matter, the images were found to be worked with wires and pulleys. The German lady was kept as a curiosity in the cabinet of the Elector of Saxony. Our Boxley rood was brought up and exhibited in Cheapside, and was afterwards torn in pieces by the people.

Nor here again was death the limit of extortion: death was rather the gate of the sphere which the clergy made peculiarly their own. When a man died, his friends were naturally anxious for the fate of his soul. If he died in communion, he was not in the worst place of all. He had not been a saint, and therefore he was not in the best. Therefore he was in purgatory—Purgatory Pickpurse, as our English Latimer called it—and a priest, if properly paid, could get him out.

To be a mass priest, as it was called, was a regular profession, in which, with little trouble, a man could earn a comfortable living. He had only to be ordained and to learn by heart a certain form of words, and that was all the equipment necessary for him. The masses were paid for at so much a dozen, and for every mass that was said, so many years were struck off from the penal period. Two priests were sometimes to be seen muttering away at the opposite ends of the same altar, like a couple of musical boxes playing different parts of the same tune at the same time. It made no difference.

The upper powers had what they wanted. If they got the masses, and the priests got the money, all parties concerned were satisfied.

I am speaking of the form which these things assumed in an age of degradation and ignorance. The truest and wisest words ever spoken by man might be abused in the same way. The Sermon on the Mount or the Apostles' Creed, if recited mechanically, and relied on to work a mechanical effort, would be no less perniciously idolatrous.

You can see something of the same kind in a milder form in Spain at the present day. The Spaniards, all of them, high and low, are expected to buy annually a Pope's Bula or Bull—a small pardon, or indulgence, or plenary remission of sins. The exact meaning of these things is a little obscure; the high authorities themselves do not universally agree about them, except so far as to say that they are of prodigious value of some sort. The orthodox explanation, I believe, is something of this kind. With every sin there is the moral guilt and the temporal penalty. The pardon cannot touch the guilt; but when the guilt is remitted, there is still the penalty. I may ruin my health by a dissolute life; I may repent of my dissoluteness and be forgiven; but the bad health will remain. For bad health, substitute penance in this world and purgatory in the next; and in this sphere the indulgence takes effect.

Such as they are, at any rate, everybody in Spain has these bulls; you buy them in the shops for a shilling apiece.

This is one form of the thing. Again, at the door of a Spanish church you will see hanging on the wall an intimation that whoever will pray so many hours before a particular image shall receive full forgiveness of his sins. Having got that, one might suppose he would be satisfied; but no—if he prays so many more hours, he can get off a hundred years of purgatory, or a thousand,

or ten thousand. In one place I remember observing that for a very little trouble a man could escape a hundred and fifty thousand years of purgatory.

What a prospect for the ill-starred Protestant, who will be lucky if he is admitted into purgatory at all!

Again, if you enter a sacristy, you will see a small board like the notices addressed to parishioners in our vestries. On particular days it is taken out and hung up in the church, and little would a stranger, ignorant of the language, guess the tremendous meaning of that commonplace appearance. On these boards is written, "Hoy se sacan animas,"—"This day, souls are taken out of purgatory." It is an intimation to every one with a friend in distress that now is his time. You put a shilling in a plate, you give your friend's name, and the thing is done. One wonders why, if purgatory can be sacked so easily, any poor wretch is left to suffer there.

Such practices nowadays are comparatively innocent, the money asked and given is trifling, and probably no one concerned in the business believes much about it. They serve to show, however, on a small scale, what once went on on an immense scale; and even such as they are, pious Catholics do not much approve of them. They do not venture to say much on the subject directly, but they allow themselves a certain good-humoured ridicule. A Spanish novelist of some reputation tells a story of a man coming to a priest on one of these occasions, putting a shilling in the plate, and giving in the name of his friend.

"Is my friend's soul out?" he asked. The priest said it was. "Quite sure?" the man asked. "Quite sure," the priest answered. "Very well," said the man, "if he is out of purgatory they will not put him in again: it is a bad shilling."

Sadder than all else, even as the most beautiful things are worst in their degradation, was the condition of the monasteries. I am here on delicate ground.

The account of those institutions, as they existed in England and Germany at the time of their suppression, is so shocking that even impartial writers have hesitated to believe the reports which have come down to us. The laity, we are told, determined to appropriate the abbey lands, and maligned the monks to justify the spoliation. Were the charge true, the religious orders would still be without excuse, for the whole education of the country was in the hands of the clergy; and they had allowed a whole generation to grow up, which, on this hypothesis, was utterly depraved.

But no such theory can explain away the accumulated testimony which comes to us—exactly alike—from so many sides and witnesses. We are not dependent upon evidence which Catholics can decline to receive. In the reign of our Henry the Seventh the notorious corruption of some of the great abbeys in England brought them under the notice of the Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Morton. The archbishop, unable to meddle with them by his own authority, obtained the necessary powers from the Pope. He instituted a partial visitation in the neighbourhood of London; and the most malignant Protestant never drew such a picture of profligate brutality as Cardinal Morton left behind him in his Register, in a description of the great Abbey of St. Albans. I cannot, in a public lecture, give you the faintest idea of what it contains. The monks were bound to celibacy—that is to say, they were not allowed to marry. They were full-fed, idle, and sensual; of sin they thought only as something extremely pleasant, of which they could cleanse one another with a few mumbled words as easily as they could wash their faces in a basin. And there I must leave the matter. Anybody who is curious for particulars may see the original account in Morton's Register, in the Archbishop's library at Lambeth.

A quarter of a century after this there appeared

in Germany a book, now called by Catholics an infamous libel, the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum.* "The obscure men," supposed to be the writers of these epistles, are monks or students of theology. The letters themselves are written in dog-Latin—a burlesque of the language in which ecclesiastical people then addressed each other. They are sketches, satirical, but not malignant, of the moral and intellectual character of these reverend personages.

On the moral, and by far the most important, side of the matter I am still obliged to be silent; but I can give you a few specimens of the furniture of the theological minds, and of the subjects with which they were occupied.

A student writes to his ghostly father in an agony of distress because he has touched his hat to a Jew. He mistook him for a doctor of divinity; and on the whole, he fears he has committed mortal sin. Can the father absolve him? Can the bishop absolve him? Can the Pope absolve him? His case seems utterly desperate.

Another letter describes a great intellectual riddle, which was argued for four days at the School of Logic at Louvaine. A certain Master of Arts had taken out his degree at Louvaine, Leyden, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, Padua, and four other universities. He was thus a member of ten universities. But how *could* a man be a member of ten universities? A university was a body, and one body might have many members; but how one member could have many bodies, passed comprehension. In such a monstrous anomaly, the member would be the body, and the universities the member, and this would be a scandal to such grave and learned corporations. The holy doctor St. Thomas himself could not make himself into the body of ten universities.

The more the learned men argued, the deeper they floundered, and at length gave up the problem in despair.

Again: a certain professor argues that Julius Cæsar

could not have written the book which passes under the name of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, because that book is written in Latin, and Latin is a difficult language; and a man whose life is spent in marching and fighting has notoriously no time to learn Latin.

Here is another fellow—a monk this one—describing to a friend the wonderful things which he has seen in Rome.

"You may have heard," he says, "how the Pope did possess a monstrous beast called an Elephant. The Pope did entertain for this beast a very great affection, and now behold it is dead. When it fell sick, the Pope called his doctors about him in great sorrow, and said to them, 'If it be possible, heal my elephant.' Then they gave the elephant a purge, which cost five hundred crowns, but it did not avail, and so the beast departed; and the Pope grieves much for his elephant, for it was indeed a miraculous beast, with a long, long, prodigious long nose; and when it saw the Pope it kneeled down before him and said, with a terrible voice, 'Bar, bar, bar!'"

I will not tire you with any more of this nonsense, especially as I cannot give you the really characteristic parts of the book.

I want you to observe, however, what Sir Thomas More says of it, and nobody will question that Sir Thomas More was a good Catholic and a competent witness. "These epistles," he says, "are the delight of every one. The wise enjoy the wit; the blockheads of monks take them seriously, and believe that they have been written to do them honour. When we laugh, they think we are laughing at the style, which they admit to be comical. But they think the style is made up for by the beauty of the sentiment. The scabbard, they say, is rough, but the blade within it is divine. The deliberate idiots would not have found out the jest for themselves in a hundred years."

Well might Erasmus exclaim, "What fungus could be more stupid? yet these are the Atlases who are to uphold the tottering Church!"

"The monks had a pleasant time of it," says Luther. "Every brother had two cans of beer and a quart of wine for his supper, with gingerbread, to make him take to his liquor kindly. Thus the poor things came to look like fiery angels."

And more gravely, "In the cloister rule the seven deadly sins—covetousness, lasciviousness, uncleanness, hate, envy, idleness, and the loathing of the service of God."

Consider such men as these owning a third, a half, sometimes two-thirds of the land in every country in Europe, and, in addition to their other sins, neglecting all the duties attaching to this property—the woods cut down and sold, the houses falling to ruin—unthrift, neglect, waste everywhere and in everything—the shrewd making the most of their time, which they had sense to see might be a short one—the rest dreaming on in sleepy sensuality, dividing their hours between the chapel, the pothouse, and the brothel.

I do not think that, in its main features, the truth of this sketch can be impugned; and if it be just even in outline, then a reformation of some kind or other was overwhelmingly necessary. Corruption beyond a certain point becomes unendurable to the coarsest nostril. The constitution of human things cannot away with it.

Something was to be done; but what, or how? There were three possible courses.

Either the ancient discipline of the Church might be restored by the heads of the Church themselves.

Or, secondly, a higher tone of feeling might gradually be introduced among clergy and laity alike, by education and literary culture. The discovery of the printing press had made possible a diffusion of knowledge which had been unattainable in earlier ages. The ecclesiastical

constitution, like a sick human body, might recover its tone if a better diet were prepared for it.

Or, lastly, the common sense of the laity might take the matter at once into their own hands, and make free use of the pruning knife and the sweeping brush. There might be much partial injustice, much violence, much wrongheadedness; but the people would, at any rate, go direct to the point, and the question was whether any other remedy would serve.

The first of these alternatives may at once be dismissed. The heads of the Church were the last persons in the world to discover that anything was wrong. People of that sort always are. For them the thing as it existed answered excellently well. They had boundless wealth, and all but boundless power. What could they ask for more? No monk drowsing over his wine-pot was less disturbed by anxiety than nine out of ten of the high dignitaries who were living on the eve of the Judgment Day, and believed that their seat was established for them for ever.

The character of the great ecclesiastics of that day you may infer from a single example. The Archbishop of Mayence was one of the most enlightened Churchmen in Germany. He was a patron of the Renaissance, a friend of Erasmus, a liberal, an intelligent, and, as times went, and considering his trade, an honourable, high-minded man.

When the Emperor Maximilian died, and the imperial throne was vacant, the Archbishop of Mayence was one of seven electors who had to choose a new emperor.

There were two competitors—Francis the First and Maximilian's grandson, afterwards the well-known Charles the Fifth.

Well, of the seven electors six were bribed. John Frederick of Saxony, Luther's friend and protector, was the only one of the party who came out of the business with clean hands.

But the Archbishop of Mayence took bribes six times alternately from both the candidates. He took money as coolly as the most rascally ten-pound householder in Yarmouth or Totnes, and finally drove a hard bargain for his actual vote.

The grape does not grow upon the blackthorn; nor does healthy reform come from high dignitaries like the Archbishop of Mayence.

The other aspect of the problem I shall consider in the following Lectures.

LECTURE II

In the year 1467—the year in which Charles the Bold became Duke of Burgundy—four years before the great battle of Barnet, which established our own fourth Edward on the English throne—about the time when William Caxton was setting up his printing press at Westminster—there was born at Rotterdam, on the 28th of October, Desiderius Erasmus. His parents, who were middle-class people, were well-to-do in the world. For some reason or other they were prevented from marrying by the interference of relations. The father died soon after in a cloister; the mother was left with her illegitimate infant, whom she called first, after his father, Gerard; but afterwards, from his beauty and grace, she changed his name—the words Desiderius Erasmus, one with a Latin, the other with a Greek, derivation, meaning the lovely or delightful one.

Not long after, the mother herself died also. The little Erasmus was the heir of a moderate fortune; and his guardians, desiring to appropriate it to themselves, endeavoured to force him into a convent at Brabant.

The thought of living and dying in a house of religion was dreadfully unattractive; but an orphan boy's

resistance was easily overcome. He was bullied into yielding, and, when about twenty, took the vows.

The life of a monk, which was uninviting on the surface, was not more lovely when seen from within.

"A monk's holy obedience," Erasmus wrote afterwards, "consists in—what? In leading an honest, chaste, and sober life? Not the least. In acquiring learning, in study, and industry? Still less. A monk may be a glutton, a drunkard, a whoremonger, an ignorant, stupid, malignant, envious brute, but he has broken no vow, he is within his holy obedience. He has only to be the slave of a superior as good for nothing as himself, and he is an excellent brother."

The misfortune of his position did not check Erasmus's intellectual growth. He was a brilliant, witty, sarcastic, mischievous youth. He did not trouble himself to pine and mope; but, like a young thoroughbred in a drove of asses, he used his heels pretty freely.

While he played practical jokes upon the unreverend fathers, he distinguished himself equally by his appetite for knowledge. It was the dawn of the Renaissance—the revival of learning. The discovery of printing was reopening to modern Europe the great literature of Greece and Rome, and the writings of the Christian fathers. For studies of this kind, Erasmus, notwithstanding the disadvantages of cowl and frock, displayed extraordinary aptitude. He taught himself Greek when Greek was the language which, in the opinion of the monks, only the devils spoke in the wrong place. His Latin was as polished as Cicero's; and at length the Archbishop of Cambray heard of him, and sent him to the University of Paris.

At Paris he found a world where life could be sufficiently pleasant, but where his religious habit was every moment in his way. He was a priest, and so far could not help himself. That ink-spot not all the waters of the German Ocean could wash away. But he did not

care for the low debaucheries, where the frock and cowl were at home. His place was in the society of cultivated men, who were glad to know him and to patronise him; so he shook off his order, let his hair grow, and flung away his livery.

The archbishop's patronage was probably now withdrawn. Life in Paris was expensive, and Erasmus had for several years to struggle with poverty. We see him, however, for the most part—in his early letters—carrying a bold front to fortune; desponding one moment, and larking the next with a Paris grisette; making friends, enjoying good company, enjoying especially good wine when he could get it; and, above all, satiating his literary hunger at the library of the university.

In this condition, when about eight-and-twenty, he made acquaintance with two young English noblemen who were travelling on the Continent, Lord Mountjoy and one of the Greys.

Mountjoy, intensely attracted by his brilliance, took him for his tutor, carried him over to England, and introduced him at the Court of Henry the Seventh. At once his fortune was made. He charmed every one, and in turn he was himself delighted with the country and the people. English character, English hospitality, English manners—everything English except the beer—equally pleased him. In the young London men—the lawyers, the noblemen, even in some of the clergy—he found his own passion for learning. Sir Thomas More, who was a few years younger than himself, became his dearest friend; and Warham, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury—Fisher, afterwards Bishop of Rochester—Colet, the famous Dean of St. Paul's—the great Wolsey himself—recognised and welcomed the rising star of European literature.

Money flowed in upon him. Warham gave him a benefice in Kent, which was afterwards changed to a

pension. Prince Henry, when he became king, offered him—kings in those days were not bad friends to literature—Henry offered him, if he would remain in England, a house large enough to be called a palace, and a pension which, converted into our money, would be a thousand pounds a year.

Erasmus, however, was a restless creature, and did not like to be caged or tethered. He declined the king's terms, but Mountjoy settled a pension on him instead. He had now a handsome income, and he understood the art of enjoying it. He moved about as he pleased—now to Cambridge, now to Oxford, and, as the humour took him, back again to Paris; now staying with Sir Thomas More at Chelsea, now going a pilgrimage with Dean Colet to Becket's tomb at Canterbury—but always studying, always gathering knowledge, and throwing it out again, steeped in his own mother wit, in shining Essays or Dialogues, which were the delight and the despair of his contemporaries.

Everywhere, in his love of pleasure, in his habits of thought, in his sarcastic scepticism, you see the healthy, clever, well-disposed, tolerant, epicurean, intellectual man of the world.

He went, as I said, with Dean Colet to Becket's tomb. At a shrine about Canterbury he was shown an old shoe which tradition called the Saint's. At the tomb itself, the great sight was a handkerchief which a monk took from among the relics, and offered it to the crowd to kiss. The worshippers touched it in pious adoration, with clasped hands and upturned eyes. If the thing was genuine, as Erasmus observed, it had but served for the archbishop to wipe his nose with—and Dean Colet, a Puritan before his time, looked on with eyes flashing scorn, and scarcely able to keep his hands off the exhibitors. But Erasmus smiled kindly, reflecting that mankind were fools, and in some form or other would remain fools. He took

notice only of the pile of gold and jewels, and concluded that so much wealth might prove dangerous to its possessors.

The peculiarities of the English people interested and amused him. "You are going to England," he wrote afterwards to a friend; "you will not fail to be pleased. You will find the great people there most agreeable and gracious; only be careful not to presume upon their intimacy. They will condescend to your level, but do not you therefore suppose that you stand upon theirs. The noble lords are gods in their own eyes.

"For the other classes, be courteous, give your right hand, do not take the wall, do not push yourself. Smile on whom you please, but trust no one that you do not know; above all, speak no evil of England to them. They are proud of their country above all nations in the world, as they have good reason to be."

These directions might have been written yesterday. The manners of the ladies have somewhat changed. "English ladies," says Erasmus, "are divinely pretty, and *too* good-natured. They have an excellent custom among them, that wherever you go the girls kiss you. They kiss you when you come, they kiss you when you go, they kiss you at intervening opportunities, and their lips are soft, warm, and delicious." Pretty well that, for a priest!

The custom, perhaps, was not quite so universal as Erasmus would have us believe. His own coaxing ways may have had something to do with it. At any rate, he found England a highly agreeable place of residence.

Meanwhile, his reputation as a writer spread over the world. Latin—the language in which he wrote—was in universal use. It was the vernacular of the best society in Europe, and no living man was so perfect a master of it. His satire flashed about among all

existing institutions, scathing especially his old enemies the monks; while the great secular clergy, who hated the religious orders, were delighted to see them scourged, and themselves to have the reputation of being patrons of toleration and reform.

Erasmus, as he felt his ground more sure under him, obtained from Julius the Second a distinct release from his monastic vows; and, shortly after, when the brilliant Leo succeeded to the tiara, and gathered about him the magnificent cluster of artists who have made his era so illustrious, the new Pope invited Erasmus to visit him at Rome, and become another star in the constellation which surrounded the Papal throne.

Erasmus was at this time forty years old—the age when ambition becomes powerful in men, and takes the place of love of pleasure. He was received at Rome with princely distinction, and he could have asked for nothing—bishoprics, red hats, or red stockings—which would not have been freely given to him if he would have consented to remain.

But he was too considerable a man to be tempted by finery; and the Pope's livery, gorgeous though it might be, was but a livery after all. Nothing which Leo the Tenth could do for Erasmus could add lustre to his coronet. More money he might have had, but of money he had already abundance, and outward dignity would have been dearly bought by gilded chains. He resisted temptation; he preferred the northern air, where he could breathe at liberty, and he returned to England, half inclined to make his home there.

But his own sovereign laid claim to his services; the future emperor recalled him to the Low Countries, settled a handsome salary upon him, and established him at the University of Louvaine.

He was now in the zenith of his greatness. He had an income as large as many an English nobleman. We find him corresponding with popes, cardinals, kings,

and statesmen; and as he grew older, his mind became more fixed upon serious subjects. The ignorance and brutality of the monks, the corruption of the spiritual courts, the absolute irreligion in which the Church was steeped, gave him serious alarm. He had no enthusiasms, no doctrinal fanaticisms, no sectarian beliefs or superstitions. The breadth of his culture, his clear understanding, and the worldly moderation of his temper, seemed to qualify him above living men to conduct a temperate reform. He saw that the system around him was pregnant with danger, and he resolved to devote what remained to him of life to the introduction of a higher tone in the minds of the clergy.

The revival of learning had by this time alarmed the religious orders. Literature and education, beyond the code of the theological text-books, appeared simply devilish to them. When Erasmus returned to Louvaine, the battle was raging over the north of Europe.

The Dominicans at once recognised in Erasmus their most dangerous enemy. At first they tried to compel him to re-enter the order, but, strong in the Pope's dispensation, he was so far able to defy them. They could bark at his heels, but dared not come to closer quarters; and with his temper slightly ruffled, but otherwise contented to despise them, he took up boldly the task which he had set himself.

"We kiss the old shoes of the saints," he said, "but we never read their works." He undertook the enormous labour of editing and translating selections from the writings of the Fathers. The New Testament was as little known as the lost books of Tacitus—all that the people knew of the Gospels and the Epistles were the passages on which theologians had built up the Catholic formulas. Erasmus published the text, and with it, and to make it intelligible, a series of paraphrases, which rent away the veil of traditional and dogmatic interpretation, and brought the teaching of Christ and

the Apostles into their natural relation with reason and conscience.

In all this, although the monks might curse, he had countenance and encouragement from the great ecclesiastics in all parts of Europe—and it is highly curious to see the extreme freedom with which they allowed him to propose to them his plans for a Reformation—we seem to be listening to the wisest of modern broad Churchmen.

To one of his correspondents, an archbishop, he writes:—

"Let us have done with theological refinements. There is an excuse for the Fathers, because the heretics forced them to define particular points; but every definition is a misfortune, and for us to persevere in the same way is sheer folly. Is no man to be admitted to grace who does not know how the Father differs from the Son, and both from the Spirit? or how the nativity of the Son differs from the procession of the Spirit? Unless I forgive my brother his sins against me, God will not forgive me my sins. Unless I have a pure heart—unless I put away envy, hate, pride, avarice, lust, I I shall not see God. But a man is not damned because he cannot tell whether the Spirit has one principle or two. Has he the fruits of the Spirit? That is the question. Is he patient, kind, good, gentle, modest, temperate, chaste? Enquire if you will, but do not define. True religion is peace, and we cannot have peace unless we leave the conscience unshackled on obscure points on which certainty is impossible. We hear now of questions being referred to the next Œcumenical Council—better a great deal refer them to doomsday. Time was, when a man's faith was looked for in his life, not in the Articles which he professed. Necessity first brought Articles upon us, and ever since we have refined and refined till Christianity has become a thing of words and creeds. Articles increase—sincerity vanishes away

—contention grows hot, and charity grows cold. Then comes in the civil power, with stake and gallows, and men are forced to profess what they do not believe, to pretend to love what in fact they hate, and to say that they understand what in fact has no meaning for them."

Again, to the Archbishop of Mayence:—

"Reduce the dogmas necessary to be believed, to the smallest possible number; you can do it without danger to the realities of Christianity. On other points, either discourage enquiry, or leave every one free to believe what he pleases—then we shall have no more quarrels, and religion will again take hold of life. When you have done this, you can correct the abuses of which the world with good reason complains. The unjust judge heard the widow's prayer. You should not shut your ears to the cries of those for whom Christ died. He did not die for the great only, but for the poor and for the lowly. There need be no tumult. Do you only set human affections aside, and let kings and princes lend themselves heartily to the public good. But observe that the monks and friars be allowed no voice; with these gentlemen the world has borne too long. They care only for their own vanity, their own stomachs, their own power; and they believe that if the people are enlightened, their kingdom cannot stand."

Once more to the Pope himself:

"Let each man amend first his own wicked life. When he has done that, and will amend his neighbour, let him put on Christian charity, which is severe enough when severity is needed. If your holiness give power to men who neither believe in Christ nor care for you, but think only of their own appetites, I fear there will be danger. We can trust your holiness, but there are bad men who will use your virtues as a cloke for their own malice."

That the spiritual rulers of Europe should have

allowed a man like Erasmus to use language such as this to them is a fact of supreme importance. It explains the feeling of Goethe, that the world would have gone on better had there been no Luther, and that the revival of theological fanaticism did more harm than good.

But the question of questions is, what all this latitudinarian philosophising, this cultivated epicurean gracefulness would have come to if left to itself; or rather, what was the effect which it was inevitably producing? If you wish to remove an old building without bringing it in ruins about your ears, you must begin at the top, remove the stones gradually downwards, and touch the foundation last. But latitudinarianism loosens the elementary principles of theology. It destroys the premises on which the dogmatic system rests. It would beg the question to say that this would in itself have been undesirable; but the practical effect of it, as the world then stood, would have only been to make the educated into infidels, and to leave the multitude to a convenient but bebasing superstition.

The monks said that Erasmas laid the egg, and Luther hatched a cockatrice. Erasmus resented deeply such an account of his work; but it was true after all. The sceptical philosophy is the most powerful of solvents, but it has no principle of organic life in it; and what of truth there was in Erasmus's teaching had to assume a far other form before it was available for the reinvigoration of religion. He himself, in his clearer moments, felt his own incapacity, and despaired of making an impression on the mass of ignorance with which he saw himself surrounded.

"The stupid monks," he writes, "say mass as a cobbler makes a shoe; they come to the altar reeking from their filthy plasures. Confession with the monks is a cloke to steal the people's money, to rob girls of their virtue, and commit other crimes too horrible to

name! Yet these people are the tyrants of Europe. The Pope himself is afraid of them."

"Beware!" he says to an impetuous friend, "beware how you offend the monks. You have to do with an enemy that cannot be slain; an order never dies, and they will not rest till they have destroyed you."

The heads of the Church might listen politely, but Erasmus had no confidence in them. "Never," he says, "was there a time when divines were greater fools, or popes and prelates more worldly." Germany was about to receive a signal illustration of the improvement which it was to look for from liberalism and intellectual culture.

We are now on the edge of the great conflagration. Here we must leave Erasmus for the present. I must carry you briefly over the history of the other great person who was preparing to play his part on the stage. You have seen something of what Erasmus was; you must turn next to the companion picture of Martin Luther. You will observe in how many points their early experiences touch, as if to show more vividly the contrast between the two men.

Sixteen years after the birth of Erasmus, therefore in the year 1483, Martin Luther came into the world in a peasant's cottage, at Eisleben, in Saxony. By peasant, you need not understand a common boor. Hans Luther, the father, was a thrifty, well-to-do man for his station in life—adroit with his hands, and able to do many useful things, from farm work to digging in the mines. The family life was strict and stern—rather too stern, as Martin thought in later life.

"Be temperate with your children," he said, long after, to a friend; "punish them if they lie or steal, but be just in what you do. It is a lighter sin to take pears and apples than to take money. I shudder when I think of what I went through myself. My mother beat me about some nuts once till the blood came. I had a terrible time of it, but she meant well."

At school, too, he fell into rough hands, and the recollection of his sufferings made him tender ever after with young boys and girls.

"Never be hard with children," he used to say. "Many a fine character has been ruined by the stupid brutality of pedagogues. The parts of speech are a boy's pillory. I was myself flogged fifteen times in one forenoon over the conjugation of a verb. Punish if you will, but be kind too, and let the sugar-plum go with the rod." This is not the language of a demagogue or a fanatic; it is the wise thought of a tender, human-hearted man.

At seventeen, he left school for the University at Erfurt. It was then no shame for a poor scholar to maintain himself by alms. Young Martin had a rich noble voice and a fine ear, and by singing ballads in the streets he found ready friends and help. He was still uncertain with what calling he should take up, when it happened that a young friend was killed at his side by lightning.

Erasmus was a philosopher. A powder magazine was once blown up by lightning in a town where Erasmus was staying, and a house of infamous character was destroyed. The inhabitants saw in what had happened the Divine anger against sin. Erasmus told them that if there was any anger in the matter, it was anger merely with the folly which had stored powder in an exposed situation.

Luther possessed no such premature intelligence. He was distinguished from other boys only by the greater power of his feelings and the vividness of his imagination. He saw in his friend's death the immediate hand of the great Lord of the universe. His conscience was terrified. A life-long penitence seemed necessary to atone for the faults of his boyhood. He too, like Erasmus, became a monk, not forced into it—for his father knew better what the holy men were like, and

had no wish to have son of his among them—but because the monk of Martin's imagination spent his nights and days upon the stones in prayer; and Martin, in the heat of his repentance, longed to be kneeling at his side.

In this mood he entered the Augustine monastery at Erfurt. He was full of an overwhelming sense of his own wretchedness and sinfulness. Like St. Paul, he was crying to be delivered from the body of death which he carried about him. He practised all possible austerities. He, if no one else, mortified his flesh with fasting. He passed nights in the chancel before the altar, or on his knees on the floor of his cell. He weakened his body till his mind wandered, and he saw ghosts and devils. Above all, he saw the flaming image of his own supposed guilt. God required that he should keep the law in all points. He had not so kept the law—could not so keep the law—and therefore he believed that he was damned. One morning, he was found senseless and seemingly dead; a brother played to him on a flute, and soothed his senses back to consciousness.

It was long since any such phenomenon had appeared among the rosy friars of Erfurt. They could not tell what to make of him. Staupitz, the prior, listened to his accusations of himself in confession. "My good fellow," he said, "don't be so uneasy; you have committed no sins of the least consequence; you have not killed anybody, or committed adultery, or things of that sort. If you sin to some purpose, it is right that you should think about it, but don't make mountains out of trifles."

Very curious: to the commonplace man the uncommonplace is for ever unintelligible. What was the good of all that excitement—that agony of self-reproach for little things? None at all, if the object is only to be an ordinary good sort of man—if a decent fulfilment of the round of common duties is the be-all and the end-all of human life on earth.

The plague came by-and-bye into the town. The commonplace clergy ran away—went to their country-houses, went to the hills, went anywhere—and they wondered in the same way why Luther would not go with them. They admired him and liked him. They told him his life was too precious to be thrown away. He answered, quite simply, that his place was with the sick and dying; a monk's life was no great matter. The sun he did not doubt would continue to shine, whatever became of him. "I am no St. Paul," he said; "I am afraid of death; but there are things worse than death, and if I die, I die."

Even a Staupitz could not but feel that he had an extraordinary youth in his charge. To divert his mind from feeding upon itself, he devised a mission for him abroad, and brother Martin was dispatched on business of the convent to Rome.

Luther too, like Erasmus, was to see Rome; but how different the figures of the two men there! Erasmus goes with servants and horses, the polished, successful man of the world. Martin Luther trudges penniless and barefoot across the Alps, helped to a meal and a night's rest at the monasteries along the road, or begging, if the convents fail him, at the farmhouses.

He was still young, and too much occupied with his own sins to know much of the world outside him. Erasmus had no dreams. He knew the hard truth on most things. But Rome, to Luther's eager hopes, was the city of the saints, and the court and palace of the Pope fragrant with the odours of Paradise. "Blessed Rome," he cried, as he entered the gate—"Blessed Rome, sanctified with the blood of martyrs!"

Alas! the Rome of reality was very far from blessed. He remained long enough to complete his disenchantment. The cardinals, with their gilded chariots and their parasols of peacocks' plumes, were poor representatives of the apostles. The gorgeous churches and more

gorgeous rituals, the pagan splendour of the paintings, the heathen gods still almost worshipped in the adoration of the art which had formed them, to Luther, whose heart was heavy with thoughts of man's depravity, were utterly horrible. The name of religion was there: the thinnest veil was scarcely spread over the utter disbelief with which God and Christ were at heart regarded. Culture enough there was. It was the Rome of Raphael and Michael Angelo, of Perugino and Benvenuto; but to the poor German monk, who had come there to find help for his suffering soul, what was culture?

He fled at the first moment that he could. "Adieu! Rome," he said; "let all who would lead a holy life depart from Rome Everything is permitted in Rome except to be an honest man." He had no thought of leaving the Roman Church. To a poor monk like him, to talk of leaving the Church was like talking of leaping off the planet. But perplexed and troubled he returned to Saxony; and his friend Staupitz, seeing clearly that a monastery was no place for him, recommended him to the Elector as Professor of Philosophy at Wittenberg.

The senate of Wittenberg gave him the pulpit of the town church, and there at once he had room to show what was in him. "This monk," said some one who heard him, "is a marvellous fellow. He has strange eyes, and will give the doctors trouble by-and-bye."

He had read deeply, especially he had read that rare and almost unknown book, the *New Testament*. He was not cultivated like Erasmus. Erasmus spoke the most polished Latin. Luther spoke and wrote his own vernacular German. The latitudinarian philosophy, the analytical acuteness, the sceptical toleration of Erasmus were alike strange and distasteful to him. In all things he longed only to know the truth—to shake off and hurl from him lies and humbug.

Superstitious he was. He believed in witches and

devils and fairies—a thousand things without basis in fact, which Erasmus passed by in contemptuous indifference. But for things which were really true—true as nothing else in this world, or any world, is true—the justice of God, the infinite excellence of good, the infinite hatefulness of evil—these things he believed and felt with a power of passionate conviction to which the broader, feebler mind of the other was for ever a stranger.

We come now to the memorable year 1517, when Luther was thirty-five years old. A new cathedral was in progress at Rome. Michael Angelo had furnished Leo the Tenth with the design of St. Peter's; and the question of questions was to find money to complete the grandest structure which had ever been erected by man.

Pope Leo was the most polished and cultivated of mankind. The work to be done was to be the most splendid which art could produce. The means to which the Pope had recourse will serve to show us how much all that would have done for us.

You remember what I told you about indulgences. The notable device of his Holiness was to send distinguished persons about Europe with sacks of indulgences. Indulgences and dispensations! Dispensations to eat meat on fast-days—dispensations to marry one's near relation—dispensations for anything and everything which the faithful might wish to purchase who desired forbidden pleasures. The dispensations were simply scandalous. The indulgences—well, if a pious Catholic is asked nowadays what they were, he will say that they were the remission of the penances which the Church inflicts upon earth; but it is also certain that they would have sold cheap if the people had thought that this was all that they were to get by them. As the thing was represented by the spiritual hawkers who disposed of these wares, they were letters of credit on heaven. When the great book was opened, the people believed

that these papers would be found entire on the right side of the account. Debtor—so many murders, so many robberies, lies, slanders, or debaucheries. Creditor—the merits of the saints placed to the account of the delinquent by the Pope's letters, in consideration of value received.

This is the way in which the pardon system was practically worked. This is the way in which it is worked still, where the same superstitions remain.

If one had asked Pope Leo whether he really believed in these pardons of his, he would have said officially that the Church had always held that the Pope had power to grant them.

Had he told the truth, he would have added privately that if the people chose to be fools, it was not for him to disappoint them.

The collection went on. The money of the faithful came in plentifully; and the pedlars going their rounds appeared at last in Saxony.

The Pope had bought the support of the Archbishop of Mayence, Erasmus's friend, by promising him half the spoil which was gathered in his province. The agent was the Dominican monk Tetzel, whose name has acquired a forlorn notoriety in European history.

His stores were opened in town after town. He entered in state. The streets everywhere were hung with flags. Bells were pealed; nuns and monks walked in procession before and after him, while he himself sate in a chariot, with the Papal Bull on a velvet cushion in front of him. The sale-rooms were the churches. The altars were decorated, the candles lighted, the arms of St. Peter blazoned conspicuously on the roof. Tetzel from the pulpit explained the efficacy of his medicines; and if any profane person doubted their power, he was threatened with excommunication.

Acolytes walked through the crowds, clinking their plates and crying, "Buy! buy!" The business went

as merry as a marriage bell till the Dominican came near to Wittenberg.

Half a century before, such a spectacle would have excited no particular attention. The few who saw through the imposition would have kept their thoughts to themselves; the many would have paid their money, and in a month all would have been forgotten.

But the fight between the men of letters and the monks, the writings of Erasmus and Reuchlin, the satires of Ulric von Hutten, had created a silent revolution in the minds of the younger laity.

A generation had grown to manhood of whom the Church authorities knew nothing; and the whole air of Germany, unsuspected by pope or prelate, was charged with electricity.

Had Luther stood alone, he, too, would probably have remained silent. What was he, a poor, friendless, solitary monk, that he should set himself against the majesty of the triple crown?

However hateful the walls of a dungeon, a man of sense confined alone there does not dash his hands against the stones.

But Luther knew that his thoughts were the thoughts of thousands. Many wrong things, as we all know, have to be endured in this world. Authority is never very angelic; and moderate injustice, a moderate quantity of lies, is more tolerable than anarchy.

But it is with human things as it is with the great icebergs which drift southward out of the frozen seas. They swim two-thirds under water, and one-third above; and so long as the equilibrium is sustained, you would think that they were as stable as the rocks. But the sea-water is warmer than the air. Hundreds of fathoms down, the tepid current washes the base of the berg. Silently in those far deeps the centre of gravity is changed; and then, in a moment, with one vast roll, the enormous mass heaves over, and the crystal peaks

which had been glancing so proudly in the sunlight are buried in the ocean for ever.

Such a process as this had been going on in Germany, and Luther knew it, and knew that the time was come for him to speak. Fear had not kept him back. The danger to himself would be none the less because he would have the people at his side. The fiercer the thunderstorm, the greater peril to the central figure who stands out above the rest exposed to it. But he saw that there was hope at last of a change; and for himself—as he said in the plague—if he died, he died.

Erasmus admitted frankly for himself that he did not like danger.

"As to me," he wrote to Archbishop Warham, "I have no inclination to risk my life for truth. We have not all strength for martyrdom; and if trouble come, I shall imitate St. Peter. Popes and emperors must settle the creeds. If they settle them well, so much the better; if ill, I shall keep on the safe side."

That is to say, truth was not the first necessity to Erasmus. He would prefer truth, if he could have it. If not, he could get on moderately well upon falsehood. Luther could not. No matter what the danger to himself, if he could smite a lie upon the head and kill it, he was better pleased than by a thousand lives. We hear much of Luther's doctrine about faith. Stripped of theological verbiage, that doctrine means this.

Reason says that, on the whole, truth and justice are desirable things. They make men happier in themselves, and make society more prosperous. But there reason ends, and men will not die for principles of utility. Faith says that between truth and lies there is an infinite difference: one is of God, the other of Satan; one is eternally to be loved, the other eternally to be abhorred. It cannot say why, in language intelligible to reason. It is the voice of the nobler nature in man speaking out of his heart.

While Tetzel, with his bull and his gilt car, was coming to Wittenberg, Luther, loyal still to authority while there was a hope that authority would be on the side of right, wrote to the Archbishop of Mayence to remonstrate.

The archbishop, as we know, was to have a share of Tetzel's spoils; and what were the complaints of a poor insignificant monk to a supreme archbishop who was in debt and wanted money?

The Archbishop of Mayence flung the letter into his waste-paper basket; and Luther made his solemn appeal from earthly dignities to the conscience of the German people. Het set up his protest on the church door at Wittenberg; and, in ninety-five propositions he challenged the Catholic Church to defend Tetzel and his works.

The Pope's indulgences, he said, cannot take away sins. God alone remits sins; and He pardons those who are penitent, without help from man's absolutions.

The Church may remit penalties which the Church inflicts. But the Church's power is in this world only, and does not reach to purgatory.

If God has thought fit to place a man in purgatory, who shall say that it is good for him to be taken out of purgatory? who shall say that he himself desires it?

True repentance does not shrink from chastisement. True repentance rather loves chastisement.

The bishops are asleep. It is better to give to the poor than to buy indulgences; and he who sees his neighbour in want, and instead of helping his neighbour buys a pardon for himself, is doing what his displeasing to God. Who is this man who dares to say that for so many crowns the soul of a sinner can be made whole?

These, and like these, were Luther's propositions. Little guessed the Catholic prelates the dimensions of the act which had been done. The Pope, when he

saw the theses, smiled in good-natured contempt. "A drunken German wrote them," he said; "when he has slept off his wine, he will be of another mind."

Tetzel bayed defiance; the Dominican friars took up the quarrel; and Hochstrat of Cologne, Reuchlin's enemy, clamoured for fire and faggot.

Voice answered voice. The religious houses all Germany over were like kennels of hounds howling to each other across the spiritual waste. If souls could not be sung out of purgatory, their occupation was gone.

Luther wrote to Pope Leo to defend himself; Leo cited him to answer for his audacity at Rome; while to the young laymen, to the noble spirits all Europe over, Wittenberg became a beacon of light shining in the universal darkness.

It was a trying time to Luther. Had he been a smaller man, he would have been swept away by his sudden popularity—he would have placed himself at the head of some great democratic movement, and in a few years his name would have disappeared in the noise and smoke of anarchy.

But this was not his nature. His fellow-townsmen were heartily on his side. He remained quietly at his post in the Augustine Church at Wittenberg. If the powers of the world came down upon him and killed him, he was ready to be killed. Of himself at all times he thought infinitely little; and he believed that his death would be as serviceable to truth as his life.

Killed undoubtedly he would have been if the clergy could have had their way. It happened, however, that Saxony just then was governed by a prince of no common order. Were all princes like the Elector Frederick, we should have no need of democracy in this world—we should never have heard of democracy. The clergy could not touch Luther against the will of the Wittenberg senate, unless the Elector would help them; and, to the astonishment of everybody, the Elector was disinclined

to consent. The Pope himself wrote to exhort him to his duties. The Elector still hesitated. His professed creed was the creed in which the Church had educated him; but he had a clear secular understanding outside his formulas. When he read the propositions, they did not seem to him the pernicious things which the monks said they were. "There is much in the Bible about Christ," he said, "but not much about Rome." He sent for Erasmus, and asked him what he thought about the matter.

The Elector knew to whom he was speaking. He wished for a direct answer, and looked Erasmus full and broad in the face. Erasmus pinched his thin lips together. "Luther," he said at length, "has committed two sins: he has touched the Pope's crown and the monks' bellies."

He generously and strongly urged Frederick not to yield for the present to Pope Leo's importunacy; and the Pope was obliged to try less hasty and more formal methods.

He had wished Luther to be sent to him to Rome, where his process would have had a rapid end. As this could not be, the case was transferred to Augsberg, and a cardinal legate was sent from Italy to look into it.

There was no danger of violence at Augsburg. The townspeople there and everywhere were on the side of freedom; and Luther went cheerfully to defend himself. He walked from Wittenberg. You can fancy him still in his monk's brown frock, with all his wardrobe on his back—an apostle of the old sort. The citizens, high and low, attended him to the gates, and followed him along the road, crying "Luther for ever!" "Nay," he answered, "Christ for ever!"

The cardinal legate, being reduced to the necessity of politeness, received him civilly. He told him, however, simply and briefly, that the Pope insisted on his recantation, and would accept nothing else. Luther

requested the cardinal to point out to him where he was wrong. The cardinal waived discussion. "He was come to command," he said, "not to argue." And Luther had to tell him that it could not be.

Remonstrances, threats, entreaties, even bribes were tried. Hopes of high distinction and reward were held out to him if he would only be reasonable. To the amazement of the proud Italian, a poor peasant's son—a miserable friar of a provincial German town—was prepared to defy the power and resist the prayers of the Sovereign of Christendom. "What!" said the cardinal at last to him, "do you think the Pope cares for the opinion of a German boor? The Pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany. Do you expect your princes to take up arms to defend *you—you*, a wretched worm like you? I tell you, No! and where will you be then—where will you be then?"

Luther answered, "Then, as now, in the hands of almighty God."

The Court dissolved. The cardinal carried back his report to his master. The Pope, so defied, brought out his thunders; he excommunicated Luther; he wrote again to the elector, entreating him not to soil his name and lineage by becoming a protector of heretics; and he required him, without further ceremony, to render up the criminal to justice.

The elector's power was limited. As yet, the quarrel was simply between Luther and the Pope. The elector was by no means sure that his bold subject was right—he was only not satisfied that he was wrong—and it was a serious question with him how far he ought to go. The monk might next be placed under the ban of the empire; and if he persisted in protecting him afterwards, Saxony might have all the power of Germany upon it. He did not venture any more to refuse absolutely. He temporised and delayed; while Luther himself, probably at the elector's instigation, made overtures for peace to

the Pope. Saving his duty to Christ, he promised to be for the future an obedient son of the Church, and to say no more about indulgences if Tetzel ceased to defend them.

"My being such a small creature," Luther said afterwards, "was a misfortune for the Pope. He despised me too much! What, he thought, could a slave like me do to him—to him, who was the greatest man in all the world. Had he accepted my proposal, he would have extinguished me."

But the infallible Pope conducted himself like a proud, irascible, exceedingly fallible mortal. To make terms with the town preacher of Wittenberg was too preposterous.

Just then the imperial throne fell vacant; and the pretty scandal I told you of, followed at the choice of his successor. Frederick of Saxony might have been elected if he had liked—and it would have been better for the world perhaps if Frederick had been more ambitious of high dignities—but the Saxon Prince did not care to trouble himself with the imperial sceptre. The election fell on Maximilian's grandson Charles—grandson also of Ferdinand the Catholic—Sovereign of Spain; Sovereign of Burgundy and the Low Countries; Sovereign of Naples and Sicily; Sovereign, beyond the Atlantic, of the New Empire of the Indies.

No fitter man could have been found to do the business of the Pope. With the empire of Germany added to his inherited dominions, who could resist him?

To the new emperor, unless the elector yielded, Luther's case had now to be referred.

The elector, if he had wished, could not interfere. Germany was attentive, but motionless. The students, the artisans, the tradesmen, were at heart with the Reformer; and their enthusiasm could not be wholly repressed. The press grew fertile with pamphlets; and it was noticed that all the printers and compositors

went for Luther. The Catholics could not get their books into type without sending them to France or the Low Countries.

Yet none of the princes except the elector had as yet shown him favour. The bishops were hostile to a man. The nobles had given no sign; and their place would be naturally on the side of authority. They had no love for bishops—there was hope in that; and they looked with no favour on the huge estates of the religious orders. But no one could expect that they would peril their lands and lives for an insignificant monk.

There was an interval of two years before the emperor was at leisure to take up the question. The time was spent in angry altercation, boding no good for the future.

The Pope issued a second bull condemning Luther and his works. Luther replied by burning the bull in the great square at Wittenberg.

At length, in April 1521, the Diet of the Empire assembled at Worms, and Luther was called to defend himself in the presence of Charles the Fifth.

That it should have come to this at all, in days of such high-handed authority, was sufficiently remarkable. It indicated something growing in the minds of men, that the so-called Church was not to carry things any longer in the old style. Popes and bishops might order, but the laity intended for the future to have opinions of their own how far such orders should be obeyed.

The Pope expected anyhow that the Diet, by fair means or foul, would now rid him of his adversary. The elector, who knew the ecclesiastical ways of handling such matters, made it a condition of his subject appearing, that he should have a safe conduct, under the emperor's hand; that Luther, if judgment went against him, should be free for the time to return to the place from which he had come; and that he, the elector, should determine afterwards what should be done with him.

When the interests of the Church were concerned, safe conducts, it was too well known, were poor security. Pope Clement the Seventh, a little after, when reproached for breaking a promise, replied with a smile, "The Pope has power to bind and to loose." Good, in the eyes of ecclesiastical authorities, meant what was good for the Church; evil, whatever was bad for the Church; and the highest moral obligation became sin when it stood in St. Peter's way.

There had been an outburst of free thought in Bohemia a century and a half before. John Huss, Luther's forerunner, came with a safe conduct to the Council of Constance; but the bishops ruled that safe conducts could not protect heretics. They burnt John Huss for all their promises, and they hoped now that so good a Catholic as Charles would follow so excellent a precedent. Pope Leo wrote himself to beg that Luther's safe conduct should not be observed. The bishops and archbishops, when Charles consulted them, took the same view as the Pope.

"There is something in the office of a bishop," Luther said, a year or two later, "which is dreadfully demoralising. Even good men change their natures at their consecration; Satan enters into them as he entered into Judas, as soon as they have taken the sop."

It was most seriously likely that, if Luther trusted himself at the Diet on the faith of his safe conduct, he would never return alive. Rumours of intended treachery were so strong, that if he refused to go, the elector meant to stand by him at any cost. Should he appear, or not appear? It was for himself to decide. If he stayed away, judgment would go against him by default. Charles would call out the forces of the empire, and Saxony would be invaded.

Civil war would follow, with insurrection all over Germany, with no certain prospect except bloodshed and misery.

Luther was not a man to expose his country to peril that his own person might escape. He had provoked the storm; and if blood was to be shed, his blood ought at least to be the first. He went. On his way, a friend came to warn him again that foul play was intended, that he was condemned already, that his books had been burnt by the hangman, and that he was a dead man if he proceeded.

Luther trembled—he owned it—but he answered, "Go to Worms! I will go if there are as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses."

The roofs, when he came into the city, were crowded, not with devils, but with the inhabitants, all collecting there to see him as he passed. A nobleman gave him shelter for the night, the next day he was led to the Town Hall.

No more notable spectacle had been witnessed in this planet for many a century—not, perhaps, since a greater than Luther stood before the Roman Procurator.

There on the raised dais sate the sovereign of half the world. There on either side of him stood the archbishops, the ministers of state, the princes of the empire, gathered together to hear and judge the son of a poor miner, who had made the world ring with his name.

The body of the hall was thronged with knights and nobles—stern hard men in dull gleaming armour. Luther, in his brown frock, was led forward between their ranks. The looks which greeted him were not all unfriendly. The first Article of a German credo was belief in *courage*. Germany had had its feuds in times past with Popes of Rome, and they were not without pride that a poor countryman of theirs should have taken by the beard the great Italian priest. They had settled among themselves that, come what would, there should be fair play; and they looked on half admiring and half in scorn.

As Luther passed up the hall, a steel baron touched him on the shoulder with his gauntlet.

"Pluck up thy spirit, little monk," he said; "some of us here have seen warm work in our time, but, by my troth, nor I nor any knight in this company ever needed a stout heart more than thou needest it now. If thou hast faith in these doctrines of thine, little monk, go on, in the name of God."

"Yes, in the name of God," said Luther, throwing back his head, "In the name of God, forward!"

As at Augsburg, one only question was raised. Luther had broken the laws of the Church. He had taught doctrines which the Pope had declared to be false. Would he or would he not retract?

As at Augsburg, he replied briefly that he would retract when his doctrines were not declared to be false merely, but were proved to be false. Then, but not till then. That was his answer, and his last word.

There, as you understand, the heart of the matter indeed rested. In those words lay the whole meaning of the Reformation. Were men to go on for ever saying that this and that was true, because the Pope affirmed it? Or were Popes' decrees thenceforward to be tried like the words of other men—by the ordinary laws of evidence?

It required no great intellect to understand that a Pope's pardon, which you could buy for five shillings, could not really get a soul out of purgatory. It required a quality much rarer than intellect to look such a doctrine in the face—sanctioned as it was by the credulity of ages, and backed by the pomp and pageantry of earthly power—and say to it openly, "You are a lie." Cleverness and culture could have given a thousand reasons—they did then and they do now—why an indulgence should be believed in; when honesty and common sense could give but one reason for thinking

otherwise. Cleverness and imposture get on excellently well together—imposture and veracity, never.

Luther looked at those wares of Tetzel's, and said, "Your pardons are no pardons at all—no letters of credit on heaven, but flash notes of the Bank of Humbug, and you know it." They did know it. The conscience of every man in Europe answered back, that what Luther said was true.

Bravery, honesty, veracity, these were the qualities which were needed—which were needed then, and are needed always, as the root of all real greatness in man.

The first missionaries of Christianity, when they came among the heathen nations and found them worshipping idols, did not care much to reason that an image which man had made could not be God. The priests might have been a match for them in reasoning. They walked up to the idol in the presence of its votaries. They threw stones at it, spat upon it, insulted it. "See," they said, "I do this to your God. If he is God, let him avenge himself."

It was a simple argument; always effective; easy, and yet most difficult. It required merely a readiness to be killed upon the spot by the superstition which it outraged.

And so, and only so, can truth make its way for us in any such matters. The form changes—the thing remains. Superstition, folly, and cunning will go on to the end of time, spinning their poison webs around the consciences of mankind. Courage and veracity—these qualities, and only these, avail to defeat them.

From the moment that Luther left the emperor's presence a free man, the spell of Absolutism was broken, and the victory of the Reformation secured. The ban of the Pope had fallen; the secular arm had been called to interfere; the machinery of authority strained as far as it would bear. The emperor himself was an unconscious convert to the higher creed. The Pope had urged

him to break his word. The Pope had told him that honour was nothing, and morality was nothing, where the interests of orthodoxy were compromised. The emperor had refused to be tempted into perjury; and, in refusing, had admitted that there was a spiritual power upon the earth, above the Pope, and above him.

The party of the Church felt it so. A plot was formed to assassinate Luther on his return to Saxony. The insulted majesty of Rome could be vindicated at least by the dagger.

But this, too, failed. The elector heard what was intended. A party of horse, disguised as banditti, waylaid the Reformer upon the road, and carried him off to the castle of Wartzburg, where he remained out of harm's way till the general rising of Germany placed him beyond the reach of danger.

At Wartzburg for the present evening we leave him.

The Emperor Charles and Luther never met again. The monks of Yuste, who watched on the deathbed of Charles, reported that at the last hour he repented that he had kept his word and reproached himself for having allowed the arch-heretic to escape from his hands.

It is possible that, when the candle of life was burning low, and spirit and flesh were failing together, and the air of the sick room was thick and close with the presence of the angel of death, the nobler nature of the emperor might have yielded to the influences which were around him. His confessor might have thrust into his lips the words which he so wished to hear.

But Charles the Fifth, though a Catholic always, was a Catholic of the old grand type, to whom creed and dogmas were but the robe of a regal humanity. Another story is told of Charles—an authentic story this one—which makes me think that the monks of Yuste mistook or maligned him. Six and twenty years after this scene at Worms, when the then dawning heresy had become

broad day; when Luther had gone to his rest—and there had gathered about his name the hate which mean men feel for an enemy who has proved too strong for them—a passing vicissitude in the struggle brought the emperor at the head of his army to Wittenberg.

The vengeance which the monks could not inflict upon him in life, they proposed to wreak upon his bones.

The emperor desired to be conducted to Luther's tomb; and as he stood gazing at it, full of many thoughts, some one suggested that the body should be taken up and burnt at the stake in the Market Place.

There was nothing unusual in the proposal; it was the common practice of the Catholic Church with the remains of heretics who were held unworthy to be left in repose in hallowed ground. There was scarcely, perhaps, another Catholic prince who would have hesitated to comply. But Charles was one of nature's gentlemen; he answered, "I war not with the dead."

LECTURE III

We have now entered upon the movement which broke the power of the Papacy—which swept Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, England, Scotland, into the stream of revolution, and gave a new direction to the spiritual history of mankind.

You would not thank me if I were to take you out into that troubled ocean. I confine myself, and I wish you to confine your attention, to the two kinds of men who appear as leaders in times of change—of whom Erasmus and Luther are respectively the types.

On one side there are the large-minded latitudinarian philosophers—men who have no confidence in the people—who have no passionate convictions; moderate men, tolerant men, who trust to education, to general progress

in knowledge and civilisation, to forbearance, to endurance, to time—men who believe that all wholesome reforms proceed downwards from the educated to the multitudes; who regard with contempt, qualified by terror, appeals to the popular conscience or to popular intelligence.

Opposite to these are the men of faith—and by faith I do not mean belief in dogmas, but belief in goodness, belief in justice, in righteousness, above all, belief in truth. Men of faith consider conscience of more importance than knowledge—or rather as a first condition—without which all the knowledge in the world is no use to a man—if he wishes to be indeed a man in any high and noble sense of the word. They are not contented with looking for what may be useful or pleasant to themselves; they look by quite other methods for what is honourable—for what is good—for what is just. They believe that if they can find out that, then at all hazards, and in spite of all present consequences to themselves, that is to be preferred. If, individually and to themselves, no visible good ever came from it, in this world or in any other, still they would say, " Let us do that and nothing else. Life will be of no value to us if we are to use it only for our own gratification."

The soldier before a battle knows that if he shirks and pretends to be ill, he may escape danger and make sure of his life. There are very few men, indeed, if it comes to that, who would not sooner die ten times over than so dishonour themselves. Men of high moral nature carry out the same principle into the details of their daily life; they do not care to live unless they may live nobly. Like my uncle Toby, they have but one fear—the fear of doing a wrong thing.

I call this faith, because there is no proof, such as will satisfy the scientific enquirer, that there is any such thing as moral truth—any such thing as absolute right and wrong at all. As the Scripture says, " Verily, thou

art a God that hidest thyself." The forces of nature pay no respect to what we call good and evil. Prosperity does not uniformly follow virtue; nor are defeat and failure necessary consequences of vice.

Certain virtues—temperance, industry, and things within reasonable limits — command their reward. Sensuality, idleness, and waste, commonly lead to ruin.

But prosperity is consistent with intense worldliness, intense selfishness, intense hardness of heart; while the grander features of human character—self-sacrifice, disregard of pleasure, patriotism, love of knowledge, devotion to any great and good cause—these have no tendency to bring men what is called fortune. They do not even necessarily promote their happiness; for do what they will in this way, the horizon of what they desire to do perpetually flies before them. High hopes and enthusiasms are generally disappointed in results; and the wrongs, the cruelties, the wretchednesses of all kinds which for ever prevail among mankind—the shortcomings in himself of which he becomes more conscious as he becomes really better—these things, you may be sure, will prevent a noble-minded man from ever being particularly happy.

If you see a man happy, as the world goes—contented with himself and contented with what is round him—such a man may be, and probably is, decent and respectable; but the highest is not in him, and the highest will not come out of him.

Judging merely by outward phenomena—judging merely by what we call reason—you cannot prove that there is any moral government in the world at all, except what men, for their own convenience, introduce into it. Right and wrong resolve themselves into principles of utility and social convenience. Enlightened selfishness prescribes a decent rule of conduct for common purposes; and virtue, by a large school of philosophy, is completely resolved into that.

True, when nations go on long on the selfish hypothesis, they are apt to find at last that they have been mistaken. They find it in bankruptcy of honour and character—in social wreck and dissolution. All lies in serious matters end at last, as Carlyle says, in broken heads. That is the final issue which they are sure to come to in the long run. The Maker of the world does not permit a society to continue which forgets or denies the nobler principles of action.

But the end is often long in coming; and these nobler principles are meanwhile *not* provided for us by the inductive philosophy.

Patriotism, for instance, of which we used to think something—a readiness to devote our energies while we live, to devote our lives, if nothing else will serve, to what we call our country—what are we to say of that?

I once asked a distinguished philosopher what he thought of patriotism. He said he thought it was a compound of vanity and superstition; a bad kind of prejudice, which would die out with the growth of reason. My friend believed in the progress of humanity —he could not narrow his sympathies to so small a thing as his own country. I could but say to myself, "Thank God, then, we are not yet a nation of philosophers."

A man who takes up with philosophy like that, may write fine books, and review articles and such like, but at the bottom of him he is a poor caitiff, and there is no more to be said about him.

So when the air is heavy with imposture, and men live only to make money, and the service of God is become a thing of words and ceremonies, and the kingdom of heaven is bought and sold, and all that is high and pure in man is smothered by corruption—fire of the same kind bursts out in higher natures with a fierceness which cannot be controlled; and, confident in truth and right, they call fearlessly on the seven thousand in Israel

who have not bowed the knee to Baal to rise and stand by them.

They do not ask whether those whom they address have wide knowledge of history, or science, or philosophy; they ask rather that they shall be honest, that they shall be brave, that they shall be true to the common light which God has given to all His children. They know well that conscience is no exceptional privilege of the great or the cultivated, that to be generous and unselfish is no prerogative of rank or intellect.

Erasmus considered that, for the vulgar, a lie might be as good as truth, and often better. A lie, ascertained to be a lie, to Luther was deadly poison—poison to him, and poison to all who meddled with it. In his own genuine greatness, he was too humble to draw insolent distinctions in his own favour; or to believe that any one class on earth is of more importance than another in the eyes of the Great Maker of them all.

Well, then, you know what I mean by faith, and what I mean by intellect. It was not that Luther was without intellect. He was less subtle, less learned, than Erasmus; but in mother wit, in elasticity, in force, and imaginative power, he was as able a man as ever lived. Luther created the German language as an instrument of literature. His translation of the Bible is as rich and grand as our own, and his table talk as full of matter as Shakespeare's plays.

Again; you will mistake me if you think I represent Erasmus as a man without conscience, or belief in God and goodness. But in Luther that belief was a certainty; in Erasmus it was only a high probability—and the difference between the two is not merely great, it is infinite. In Luther, it was the root; in Erasmus, it was the flower. In Luther, it was the first principle of life; in Erasmus, it was an inference which might be taken away, and yet leave the world a very tolerable and habitable place after all.

You see the contrast in their early lives. You see Erasmus—light, bright, sarcastic, fond of pleasure, fond of society, fond of wine and kisses, and intellectual talk and polished company. You see Luther throwing himself into the cloister, that he might subdue his will to the will of God; prostrate in prayer, in nights of agony, and distracting his easy-going confessor with the exaggerated scruples of his conscience.

You see it in the effects of their teaching. You see Erasmus addressing himself with persuasive eloquence to kings, and popes, and prelates; and for answer, you see Pope Leo sending Tetzel over Germany with his carriage-load of indulgences. You see Erasmus's dearest friend, our own gifted admirable Sir Thomas More, taking his seat beside the bishops and sending poor Protestant artisans to the stake.

You see Luther, on the other side, standing out before the world, one lone man, with all authority against him—taking lies by the throat, and Europe thrilling at his words, and saying after him, "The reign of Imposture shall end."

Let us follow the course of Erasmus after the tempest had broken.

He knew Luther to be right. Luther had but said what Erasmus had been all his life convinced of, and Luther looked to see him come forward and take his place at his side. Had Erasmus done so, the course of things would have been far happier and better. His prodigious reputation would have given the Reformers the influence with the educated which they had won for themselves with the multitude, and the Pope would have been left without a friend to the north of the Alps. But there would have been some danger—danger to the leaders, if certainty of triumph to the cause—and Erasmus had no gift for martyrdom.

His first impulse was generous. He encouraged the elector, as we have seen, to protect Luther from the

Pope. "I looked on Luther," he wrote to Duke George of Saxe, "as a necessary evil in the corruption of the Church; a medicine, bitter and drastic, from which sounder health would follow."

And again, more boldly: "Luther has taken up the cause of honesty and good sense against abominations which are no longer tolerable. His enemies are men under whose worthlessness the Christian world has groaned too long.'

So to the heads of the Church he wrote, pressing them to be moderate and careful:—

"I neither approve Luther nor condemn him," he said to the Archbishop of Mayence; "if he is innocent, he ought not to be oppressed by the factions of the wicked; if he is in error, he should be answered, not destroyed. The theologians"—observe how true they remain to the universal type in all times and in all countries—"the theologians do not try to answer him. They do but raise an insane and senseless clamour, and shriek and curse. Heresy, heretic, heresiarch, schismatic, Antichrist—these are the words which are in the mouths of all of them; and, of course, they condemn without reading. I warned them what they were doing. I told them to scream less, and to think more. Luther's life they admit to be innocent and blameless. Such a tragedy I never saw. The most humane men are thirsting for his blood, and they would rather kill him than mend him. The Dominicans are the worst, and are more knaves than fools. In old times, even a heretic was quietly listened to. If he recanted, he was absolved; if he persisted, he was at worst excommunicated. Now they will have nothing but blood. Not to agree with them is heresy. To know Greek is heresy. To speak good Latin is heresy. Whatever they do not understand is heresy. Learning, they pretend, has given birth to Luther, though Luther has but little of it. Luther thinks more of the Gospel than of scholastic

divinity, and that is his crime. This is plain at least, that the best men everywhere are those who are least offended with him."

Even to Pope Leo, in the midst of his fury, Erasmus wrote bravely; separating himself from Luther, yet deprecating violence. "Nothing," he said, "would so recommend the new teaching as the howling of fools:" while to a member of Charles's council he insisted that "severity had been often tried in such cases and had always failed; unless Luther was encountered calmly and reasonably, a tremendous convulsion was inevitable."

Wisely said all this, but it presumed that those whom he was addressing were reasonable men; and high officials, touched in their pride, are a class of persons of whom Solomon may have been thinking when he said, "Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man rather than a fool in his folly."

So to Luther, so to the people, Erasmus preached moderation. It was like preaching to the winds in a hurricane. The typhoon itself is not wilder than human creatures when once their passions are stirred. You cannot check them; but, if you are brave, you can guide them wisely. And this, Erasmus had not the heart to do.

He said at the beginning, "I will not countenance revolt against authority. A bad government is better than none." But he said at the same time, "You bishops, cease to be corrupt: you popes and cardinals, reform your wicked courts: you monks, leave your scandalous lives, and obey the rules of your order, so you may recover the respect of mankind, and be obeyed and loved as before."

When he found that the case was desperate; that his exhortations were but words addressed to the winds; that corruption had tainted the blood; that there was no hope except in revolution—as, indeed, in his heart

he knew from the first that there was none—then his place ought to have been with Luther.

But Erasmus, as the tempest rose, could but stand still in feeble uncertainty. The responsibilities of his reputation weighed him down.

The Lutherans said, " You believe as we do." The Catholics said, " You are a Lutheran at heart; if you are not, prove it by attacking Luther."

He grew impatient. He told lies. He said he had not read Luther's books, and had no time to read them. What was he, he said, that he should meddle in such a quarrel. He was the vine and the fig tree of the Book of Judges. The trees said to them, Rule over us. The vine and the fig tree answered, they would not leave their sweetness for such a thankless office. " I am a poor actor," he said; " I prefer to be a spectator of the play."

But he was sore at heart, and bitter with disappointment. All had been going on so smoothly—literature was reviving, art and science were spreading, the mind of the world was being reformed in the best sense by the classics of Greece and Rome, and now an apple of discord had been flung out into Europe.

The monks who had fought against enlightenment could point to the confusion as a fulfilment of their prophecies; and he, and all that he had done, was brought to disrepute.

To protect himself from the Dominicans, he was forced to pretend to an orthodoxy which he did not possess. Were all true which Luther had written, he pretended that it ought not to have been said, or should have been addressed in a learned language to the refined and educated.

He doubted whether it was not better on the whole to teach the people lies for their good, when truth was beyond their comprehension. Yet he could not for all that wish the Church to be successful.

"I fear for that miserable Luther," he said; "the popes and princes are furious with him. His own destruction would be no great matter, but if the monks triumph there will be no bearing them. They will never rest till they have rooted learning out of the land. The Pope expects *me* to write against Luther. The orthodox, it appears, can call him names—call him blockhead, fool, heretic, toadstool, schismatic, and Antichrist—but they must come to me to answer his arguments."

"Oh! that this had never been," he wrote to our own Archbishop Warham. "Now there is no hope for any good. It is all over with quiet learning, thought, piety, and progress; violence is on one side and folly on the other; and they accuse me of having caused it all. If I joined Luther I could only perish with him, and I do not mean to run my neck into a halter. Popes and emperors must decide matters. I will accept what is good, and do as I can with the rest. Peace on any terms is better than the justest war."

Erasmus never stooped to real baseness. He was too clever, too genuine—he had too great a contempt for worldly greatness. They offered him a bishopric if he would attack Luther. He only laughed at them. What was a bishopric to him? He preferred a quiet life among his books at Louvaine.

But there was no more quiet for Erasmus at Louvaine or anywhere. Here is a scene between him and the Prior of the Dominicans in the presence of the Rector of the University.

The Dominican had preached at Erasmus in the University pulpit. Erasmus complained to the rector, and the rector invited the Dominican to defend himself. Erasmus tells the story.

"I sate on one side and the monk on the other, the rector between us to prevent our scratching.

"The monk asked what the matter was, and said he had done no harm.

"I said he had told lies of me, and that was harm.

"It was after dinner. The holy man was flushed. He turned purple.

"'Why do you abuse monks in your books?' he said.

"'I spoke of your order,' I answered. 'I did not mention you. You denounced me by name as a friend of Luther.'

"He raged like a madman. 'You are the cause of all this trouble,' he said; 'you are a chameleon, you can twist everything.'

"'You see what a fellow he is,' said I, turning to the rector. 'If it comes to calling names, why I can do that too; but let us be reasonable.'

"He still roared and cursed; he vowed he would never rest till he had destroyed Luther.

"I said he might curse Luther till he burst himself if he pleased. I complained of his cursing me.

"He answered, that if I did not agree with Luther, I ought to say so, and write against him.

"'Why should I?' urged I. 'The quarrel is none of mine. Why should I irritate Luther against me, when he has horns and knows how to use them?'

"'Well, then,' said he, 'if you will not write, at least you can say that we Dominicans have had the best of the argument.'

"'How can I do that?' replied I. 'You have burnt his books, but I never heard that you had answered them.'

"He almost spat upon me. I understand that there is to be a form of prayer for the conversion of Erasmus and Luther."

But Erasmus was not to escape so easily. Adrian the Sixth, who succeeded Leo, was his old schoolfellow, and implored his assistance in terms which made refusal impossible. Adrian wanted Erasmus to come to him to Rome. He was too wary to walk into the wolf's

den. But Adrian required him to write, and reluctantly he felt that he must comply.

What was he to say?

"If his Holiness will set about reform in good earnest," he wrote to the Pope's secretary, "and if he will not be too hard on Luther, I may, perhaps, do good; but what Luther writes of the tyranny, the corruption, the covetousness of the Roman court, would, my friend, that it was not true."

To Adrian himself, Erasmus addressed a letter really remarkable.

"I cannot go to your holiness," he said, "King Calculus will not let me. I have dreadful health, which this tornado has not improved. I, who was the favourite of everybody, am now cursed by everybody —at Louvaine by the monks; in Germany by the Lutherans. I have fallen into trouble in my old age, like a mouse into a pot of pitch. You say, come to Rome; you might as well say to the crab, Fly. The crab says, Give me wings; I say, Give me back my health and my youth. If I write calmly against Luther I shall be called lukewarm; if I write as he does, I shall stir a hornet's nest. People think he can be put down by force. The more force you try, the stronger he will grow. Such disorders cannot be cured in that way. The Wickliffites in England were put down, but the fire smouldered.

"If you mean to use violence you have no need of me; but mark this—if monks and theologians think only of themselves, no good will come of it. Look rather into the causes of all this confusion, and apply your remedies there. Send for the best and wisest men from all parts of Christendom and take their advice."

Tell a crab to fly. Tell a pope to be reasonable. You must relieve him of his infallibility if you want him to act like a sensible man. Adrian could under-

take no reforms, and still besought Erasmus to take arms for him.

Erasmus determined to gratify Adrian with least danger to himself and least injury to Luther.

"I remember Uzzah, and am afraid," he said, in his quizzing way; "it is not everyone who is allowed to uphold the ark. Many a wise man has attacked Luther, and what has been effected? The pope curses, the emperor threatens; there are prisons, confiscations, faggots; and all is vain. What can a poor pigmy like me do?

. . . . .

"The world has been besotted with ceremonies. Miserable monks have ruled all, entangling men's consciences for their own benefit. Dogma has been heaped on dogma. The bishops have been tyrants, the Pope's commissaries have been rascals. Luther has been an instrument of God's displeasure, like Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar, or the Cæsars, and I shall not attack him on such grounds as these."

Erasmus was too acute to defend against Luther the weak point of a bad cause. He would not declare for him—but he would not go over to his enemies. Yet, unless he quarrelled with Adrian, he could not be absolutely silent; so he chose a subject to write upon on which all schools of theology, Catholic or Protestant—all philosophers, all thinkers of whatever kind, have been divided from the beginning of time: fate and free will, predestination and the liberty of man—a problem which has no solution—which may be argued even from eternity to eternity.

The reason of the selection was obvious Erasmus wished to please the Pope and not exasperate Luther. Of course he pleased neither, and offended both.

Luther, who did not comprehend his motive, was needlessly angry. Adrian and the monks were openly contemptuous. Sick of them and their quarrels, he

grew weary of the world, and began to wish to be well out of it.

It is characteristic of Erasmus that, like many highly-gifted men, but unlike all theologians, he expressed a hope for sudden death, and declared it to be one of the greatest blessings which a human creature can receive.

Do not suppose that he broke down or showed the white feather to fortune's buffets. Through all storms he stuck bravely to his own proper work; editing classics, editing the Fathers, writing paraphrases—still doing for Europe what no other man could have done.

The Dominicans hunted him away from Louvaine. There was no living for him in Germany for the Protestants. He suffered dreadfully from the stone, too, and in all ways had a cruel time of it. Yet he continued, for all that, to make life endurable.

He moved about in Switzerland and on the Upper Rhine. The lakes, the mountains, the waterfalls, the villas on the hill slopes, delighted Erasmus when few people else cared for such things. He was particular about his wine. The vintage of Burgundy was as new blood in his veins, and quickened his pen into brightness and life.

The German wines he liked worse—for this point among others, which is curious to observe in those days. The great capitalist winegrowers, anti-Reformers all of them, were people without conscience and humanity, and adulterated their liquors. Of course they did. They believed in nothing but money, and this was the way to make money.

"The water they mix with the wine," Erasmus says, "is the least part of the mischief. They put in lime, and alum, and resin, and sulphur, and salt—and then they say it is good enough for heretics."

Observe the practical issue of religious corruption.

Show me a people were trade is dishonest, and I will show you a people where religion is a sham.

"We hang men that steal money," Erasmus exclaimed, writing doubtless with the remembrance of a stomach-ache. "These wretches steal our money and our lives too, and get off scot-free."

He settled at last at Basle, which the storm had not yet reached, and tried to bury himself among his books. The shrieks of the conflict, however, still troubled his ears. He heard his own name still cursed, and he could not bear it or sit quiet under it.

His correspondence was still enormous. The high powers still appealed to him for advice and help: of open meddling he would have no more; he did not care, he said, to make a post of himself for every dog of a theologian to defile. Advice, however, he continued to give in the old style.

"Put down the preachers on both sides. Fill the pulpits with men who will kick controversy into the kennel, and preach piety and good manners. Teach nothing in the schools but what bears upon life and duty. Punish those who break the peace, and punish no one else; and when the new opinions have taken root, allow liberty of conscience."

Perfection of wisdom; but a wisdom which, unfortunately, was three centuries at least out of date, which even now we have not grown big enough to profit by. The Catholic princes and bishops were at work with fire and faggot. The Protestants were pulling down monasteries, and turning the monks and nuns out into the world. The Catholics declared that Erasmus was as much to blame as Luther. The Protestants held him responsible for the persecutions, and insisted, not without reason, that if Erasmus had been true to his conscience, the whole Catholic world must have accepted the Reformation.

He suffered bitterly under these attacks upon him. He

loved quiet—and his ears were deafened with clamour. He liked popularity—and he was the best abused person in Europe. Others who suffered in the same way he could advise to leave the black-coated jackdaws to their noise—but he could not follow his own counsel. When the curs were at his heels, he could not restrain himself from lashing out at them; and, from his retreat at Basle, his sarcasms flashed out like jagged points of lightning.

Describing an emeute, and the burning of an image of a saint, "They insulted the poor image so," he said, "it is a marvel there was no miracle. The saint worked so many in the good old times."

When Luther married an escaped nun, the Catholics exclaimed that Antichrist would be born from such an incestuous intercourse. "Nay," Erasmus said, "if monk and nun produce Antichrist, there must have been legions of Antichrists these many years."

More than once he was tempted to go over openly to Luther—not from a noble motive, but, as he confessed, "to make those furies feel the difference between him and them."

He was past sixty, with broken health and failing strength. He thought of going back to England, but England had by this time caught fire, and Basle had caught fire. There was no peace on earth.

"The horse has his heels," he said, when advised to be quiet, "the dog his teeth, the hedgehog his spines, the bee his sting. I myself have my tongue and my pen, and why should I not use them?"

Yet to use them to any purpose now, he must take a side, and, sorely tempted as he was, he could not.

With the negative part of the Protestant creed he sympathised heartily; but he did not understand Luther's doctrine of faith, because he had none of his own, and he disliked it as a new dogma.

He regarded Luther's movement as an outburst of commonplace revolution, caused by the folly and

wickedness of the authorities, but with no organising vitality in itself; and his chief distress, as we gather from his later letters, was at his own treatment. He had done his best for both sides. He had failed, and was abused by everybody.

Thus passed away the last years of one of the most gifted men that Europe has ever seen. I have quoted many of his letters. I will add one more passage, written near the end of his life, very touching and pathetic:—

"Hercules," he said, "could not fight two monsters at once; while I, poor wretch, have lions, cerberuses, cancers, scorpions every day at my sword's point; not to mention smaller vermin—rats, mosquitoes, bugs and fleas. My troops of friends are turned to enemies. At dinner-tables or social gatherings, in churches and kings' courts, in public carriage or public flyboat, scandal pursues me, and calumny defiles my name. Every goose now hisses at Erasmus; and it is worse than being stoned, once for all, like Stephen, or shot with arrows like Sebastian.

"They attack me now even for my Latin style, and spatter me with epigrams. Fame I would have parted with; but to be the sport of blackguards—to be pelted with potsherds and dirt and ordure—is not this worse than death?

"There is no rest for me in my age, unless I join Luther; and I cannot, for I cannot accept his doctrines. Sometimes I am stung with a desire to avenge my wrongs; but I say to myself, 'Will you, to gratify your spleen, raise your hand against your mother the Church, who begot you at the font and fed you with the word of God?' I cannot do it. Yet I understand now how Arius, and Tertullian, and Wickliff were driven into schism. The theologians say I am their enemy. Why? Because I bade monks remember their vows; because I told parsons to leave their wranglings and read the Bible; because I told popes and cardinals to look at the

Apostles, and make themselves more like to them. If this is to be their enemy, then indeed I have injured them."

This was almost the last. The stone, advancing years, and incessant toil had worn him to a shred. The clouds grew blacker. News came from England that his dear friends More and Fisher had died upon the scaffold. He had long ceased to care for life; and death, almost as sudden as he had longed for, gave him peace at last.

So ended Desiderius Erasmus, the world's idol for so many years; and dying heaped with undeserved but too intelligible anathemas, seeing all that he had laboured for swept away by the whirlwind.

Do not let me lead you to undervalue him. Without Erasmus, Luther would have been impossible; and Erasmus really succeeded—so much of him as deserved to succeed—in Luther's victory.

He was brilliantly gifted. His industry never tired. His intellect was true to itself; and no worldly motives ever tempted him into insincerity. He was even far braver than he professed to be. Had he been brought to the trial, he would have borne it better than many a man who boasted louder of his courage.

And yet, in his special scheme for remodelling the mind of Europe, he failed hopelessly—almost absurdly. He believed, himself, that his work was spoilt by the Reformation; but, in fact, under no conditions could any more have come of it.

Literature and cultivation will feed life when life exists already; and toleration and latitudinarianism are well enough when mind and conscience are awake and energetic of themselves.

When there is no spiritual life at all; when men live only for themselves and for sensual pleasure; when religion is superstition, and conscience a name, and God, an idol half feared and half despised—then, for the

restoration of the higher nature in man, qualities are needed different in kind from any which Erasmus possessed.

And now to go back to Luther. I cannot tell you all that Luther did; it would be to tell you all the story of the German Reformation. I want you rather to consider the kind of man that Luther was, and to see in his character how he came to achieve what he did.

You remember that the Elector of Saxony, after the Diet of Worms, sent him to the Castle of Wartzburg, to prevent him from being murdered or kidnapped. He remained there many months; and during that time the old ecclesiastical institutions of Germany were burning like a North American forest. The monasteries were broken up; the estates were appropriated by the nobles; the monks were sent wandering into the world. The bishops looked helplessly on while their ancient spiritual dominion was torn to pieces and trodden under foot. The Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, and several more of the princes, declared for the Reformation. The Protestants had a majority in the Diet, and controlled the force of the empire. Charles the Fifth, busy with his French wars, and in want of money, dared not press questions to a crisis which he had not power to cope with; and he was obliged for a time to recognise what he could not prevent. You would have thought Luther would have been well pleased to see the seed which he had sown bear fruit so rapidly; yet it was exactly while all this was going on that he experienced those temptations of the devil of which he has left so wonderful an account.

We shall have our own opinions on the nature of these apparitions. But Luther, it is quite certain, believed that Satan himself attacked him in person. Satan, he tells us, came often to him, and said, "See what you have done. Behold this ancient Church—this mother of saints—polluted and defiled by brutal violence. And

it is you—you, a poor ignorant monk, that have set the people on to their unholy work. Are you so much wiser than the saints who approved the things which you have denounced? Popes, bishops, clergy, kings, emperors—are none of these—are not all these together—wiser than Martin Luther the monk?"

The devil, he says, caused him great agony by these suggestions. He fell into deep fits of doubt and humiliation and despondency. And wherever these thoughts came from, we can only say that they were very natural thoughts—natural and right. He called them temptations; yet these were temptations which would not have occurred to any but a high-minded man.

He had, however, done only what duty had forced him to do. His business was to trust to God, who had begun the work and knew what He meant to make of it. His doubts and misgivings, therefore, he ascribed to Satan, and his enormous imaginative vigour gave body to the voice which was speaking in him.

He tells many humorous stories—not always producible—of the means with which he encountered his offensive visitor.

"The devil," he says, "is very proud, and what he least likes is to be laughed at." One night he was disturbed by something rattling in his room; the modern unbeliever will suppose it was a mouse. He got up, lit a candle, searched the apartment through, and could find nothing—the Evil One was indisputably there.

"Oh!" he said, "it is you, is it?" He returned to bed, and went to sleep.

Think as you please about the cause of the noise, but remember that Luther had not the least doubt that he was alone in the room with the actual devil, who, if he could not overcome his soul, could at least twist his neck in a moment—and then think what courage there must have been in a man who could deliberately sleep in such a presence!

During his retirement he translated the Bible. The confusion at last became so desperate that he could no longer be spared; and, believing that he was certain to be destroyed, he left Wartzburg and returned to Wittenberg. Death was always before him as supremely imminent. He used to say that it would be a great disgrace to the pope if he died in his bed. He was wanted once at Leipsic. His friends said if he went there Duke George would kill him.

"Duke George!" he said; "I would go to Leipsic if it rained Duke Georges for nine days!"

No such cataclysm of Duke Georges happily took place. The single one there was would have gladly been mischievous if he could; but Luther outlived him —lived for twenty-four years after this, in continued toil, re-shaping the German Church, and giving form to its new doctrine.

Sacerdotalism, properly so called, was utterly abolished. The corruptions of the Church had all grown out of one root—the notion that the Christian priesthood possesses mystical power, conferred through episcopal ordination.

Religion, as Luther conceived it, did not consist in certain things done to and for a man by a so-called priest. It was the devotion of each individual soul to the service of God. Masses were nothing and absolution was nothing; and a clergyman differed only from a layman in being set apart for the especial duties of teaching and preaching.

I am not concerned to defend Luther's view in this matter. It is a matter of fact only, that in getting rid of episcopal ordination, he dried up the fountain from which the mechanical and idolatrous conceptions of religion had sprung; and, in consequence, the religious life of Germany has expanded with the progress of knowledge, while priesthoods everywhere cling to the formulas of the past, in which they live, and move, and have their being.

Enough of this.

The peculiar doctrine which has passed into Europe under Luther's name is known as Justification by Faith. Bandied about as a watchword of party, it has by this time hardened into a formula, and has become barren as the soil of a trodden footpath. As originally proclaimed by Luther, it contained the deepest of moral truths. It expressed what was, and is, and must be, in one language or another, to the end of time, the conviction of every generous-minded man.

The service of God, as Luther learnt it from the monks, was a thing of desert and reward. So many good works done, so much to the right page in the great book; where the stock proved insufficient, there was the reserve fund of the merits of the saints, which the Church dispensed for money to those who needed.

"Merit!" Luther thought. "What merit can there be in such a poor caitiff as man? The better a man is—the more clearly he sees how little he is good for, the greater mockery it seems to attribute to him the notion of having deserved reward."

"Miserable creatures that we are!" he said; "we earn our bread in sin. Till we are seven years old, we do nothing but eat and drink and sleep and play; from seven to twenty-one we study four hours a day, the rest of it we run about and amuse ourselves; then we work till fifty, and then we grow again to be children. We sleep half our lives; we give God a tenth of our time: and yet we think that with our good works we can merit heaven. What have I been doing to-day? I have talked for two hours; I have been at meals three hours; I have been idle four hours! Ah, enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!"

A perpetual struggle. For ever to be falling, yet to rise again and stumble forward with eyes turned to heaven—this was the best which would ever come of man. It was accepted in its imperfection by the infinite

grace of God, who pities mortal weakness, and accepts the intention for the deed—who, when there is a sincere desire to serve Him, overlooks the shortcomings of infirmity.

Do you say such teaching leads to disregard of duty? All doctrines, when petrified into formulas, lead to that. But, as Luther said, "where real faith is, a good life follows, as light follows the sun; faint and clouded, yet ever struggling to break through the mist which envelopes it, and welcoming the roughest discipline which tends to clear and raise it.

"The barley," he says, in a homely but effective image—"the barley which we brew, the flax of which we weave our garments, must be bruised and torn ere they come to the use for which they are grown. So must Christians suffer. The natural creature must be combed and threshed. The old Adam must die, for the higher life to begin. If man is to rise to nobleness, he must first be slain."

In modern language, the poet Goethe tells us the same truth. "The natural man," he says, "is like the ore out of the iron mine. It is smelted in the furnace; it is forged into bars upon the anvil. A new nature is at last forced upon it, and it is made steel."

It was this doctrine—it was this truth rather (the word doctrine reminds one of quack medicines)—which, quickening in Luther's mind, gave Europe its new life. It was the flame which, beginning with a small spark, kindled the hearth-fires in every German household.

Luther's own life was a model of quiet simplicity. He remained poor. He might have had money if he had wished; but he chose rather, amidst his enormous labour, to work at a turning-lathe for his livelihood.

He was sociable, cheerful, fond of innocent amusements, and delighted to encourage them. His table-talk, collected by his friends, makes one of the most

brilliant books in the world. He had no monkish theories about the necessity of abstinence; but he was temperate from habit and principle. A salt herring and a hunch of bread was his ordinary meal; and he was once four days without food of any sort, having emptied his larder among the poor.

All kinds of people thrust themselves on Luther for help. Flights of nuns from the dissolved convents came to him to provide for them—naked, shivering creatures, with scarce a rag to cover them. Eight florins were wanted once to provide clothes for some of them. "Eight florins!" he said; "and where am I to get eight florins?" Great people had made him presents of plate: it all went to market to be turned into clothes and food for the wretched.

Melancthon says that, unless provoked, he was usually very gentle and tolerant. He recognised, and was almost alone in recognising, the necessity of granting liberty of conscience. No one hated Popery more than he did, yet he said:—

"The Papists must bear with us, and we with them. If they will not follow us, we have no right to force them. Wherever they can, they will hang, burn, behead, and strangle us. I shall be persecuted as long as I live, and most likely killed. But it must come to this at last—every man must be allowed to believe according to his conscience, and answer for his belief to his Maker."

Erasmus said of Luther that there were two natures in him: sometimes he wrote like an apostle—sometimes like a raving ribald.

Doubtless, Luther could be impolite on occasions. When he was angry, invectives rushed from him like boulder rocks down a mountain torrent in flood. We need not admire all that; in quiet times it is hard to understand it.

Here, for instance, is a specimen. Our Henry the

Eighth, who began life as a highly orthodox sovereign, broke a lance with Luther for the Papacy.

Luther did not credit Henry with a composition which was probably his own after all. He thought the king was put forward by some of the English bishops—"Thomists" he calls them, as men who looked for the beginning and end of wisdom to the writings of Thomas Aquinas.

"Courage," he exclaimed to them, "swine that you are! burn me then, if you can and dare. Here I am; do your worst upon me. Scatter my ashes to all the winds—spread them through all seas. My spirit shall pursue you still. Living, I am the foe of the Papacy; and dead, I will be its foe twice over. Hogs of Thomists! Luther shall be the bear in your way—the lion in your path. Go where you will, Luther shall cross you. Luther shall leave you neither peace nor rest till he has crushed in your brows of brass and dashed out your iron brains."

Strong expressions; but the times were not gentle. The prelates whom he supposed himself to be addressing were the men who filled our Smithfield with the reek of burning human flesh.

Men of Luther's stature are like the violent forces of Nature herself—terrible when roused, and in repose, majestic and beautiful. Of vanity he had not a trace. "Do not call yourselves Lutherans," he said; "call yourselves Christians. Who and what is Luther? Has Luther been crucified for the world?"

I mentioned his love of music. His songs and hymns were the expression of the very inmost heart of the German people. "Music" he called "the grandest and sweetest gift of God to man." "Satan hates music," he said; "he knows it drives the evil spirit out of us."

He was extremely interested in all natural things. Before the science of botany was dreamt of, Luther had

divined the principle of vegetable life. "The principle of marriage runs through all creation," he said; "and flowers as well as animals are male and female."

A garden called out bursts of eloquence from him; beautiful sometimes as a finished piece of poetry.

One April day as he was watching the swelling buds, he exclaimed:—

"Praise be to God the Creator, who out of a dead world makes all alive again. See those shoots how they burgeon and swell. Image of the resurrection of the dead! Winter is death—summer is the resurrection. Between them lie spring and autumn, as the period of uncertainty and change. The proverb says—

Trust not a day
Ere birth of May.

Let us pray our Father in heaven to give us this day our daily bread."

"We are in the dawn of a new era," he said another time; "we are beginning to think something of the natural world which was ruined in Adam's fall. We are learning to see all round us the greatness and glory of the Creator. We can see the Almighty hand—the infinite goodness—in the humblest flower. We praise Him—we thank Him—we glorify Him—we recognise in creation the power of His word. He spoke and it was there. The stone of the peach is hard; but the soft kernel swells and bursts it when the time comes. An egg—what a thing is that! If an egg had never been seen in Europe, and a traveller had brought one from Calcutta, how would all the world have wondered?"

And again:—

"If a man could make a single rose, we should give him an empire; yet roses, and flowers no less beautiful, are scattered in profusion over the world, and no one regards them."

There are infinite other things which I should like

to tell you about Luther, but time wears on. I must confine what more I have to say to a single matter—for which more than any other he has been blamed—I mean his marriage.

He himself, a monk and a priest, had taken a vow of celibacy. The person whom he married had been a nun, and as such had taken a vow of celibacy also.

The marriage was unquestionably no affair of passion. Luther had come to middle age when it was brought about, when temptations of that kind lose their power; and among the many accusations which have been brought against his early life, no one has ventured to charge him with incontinence. His taking a wife was a grave act deliberately performed; and it was either meant as a public insult to established ecclesiastical usage, or else he considered that the circumstances of the time required it of him.

Let us see what those circumstances were. The enforcement of celibacy on the clergy was, in Luther's opinion, both iniquitous in itself, and productive of enormous immorality. The impurity of the religious orders had been the jest of satirists for a hundred years It had been the distress and perplexity of pious and serious persons. Luther himself was impressed with profound pity for the poor men, who were cut off from the natural companionship which nature had provided for them—who were thus exposed to temptations which they ought not to have been called upon to resist.

The dissolution of the religious houses had enormously complicated the problem. Germany was covered with friendless and homeless men and women adrift upon the world. They came to Luther to tell them what to do; and advice was of little service without example.

The world had grown accustomed to immorality in such persons. They might have lived together in concubinage, and no one would have thought much

about it. Their marriage was regarded with a superstitious terror as a kind of incest.

Luther, on the other hand, regarded marriage as the natural and healthy state in which clergy as well as laity were intended to live. Immorality was hateful to him as a degradation of a sacrament—impious, loathsome, and dishonoured. Marriage was the condition in which humanity was at once purest, best, and happiest.

For himself, he had become inured to a single life. He had borne the injustice of his lot, when the burden had been really heavy. But time and custom had lightened the load; and had there been nothing at issue but his own personal happiness, he would not have given further occasion to the malice of his enemies.

But tens of thousands of poor creatures were looking to him to guide them—guide them by precept, or guide them by example. He had satisfied himself that the vow of celibacy had been unlawfully imposed both on him and them—that, as he would put it, it had been a snare devised by the devil. He saw that all eyes were fixed on him—that it was no use to tell others that they might marry, unless he himself led the way, and married first. And it was characteristic of him that, having resolved to do the thing, he did it in the way most likely to show the world his full thought upon the matter.

That this was his motive, there is no kind of doubt whatever.

"We may be able to live unmarried," he said; "but in these days we must protest in deed as well as word, against the doctrine of celibacy. It is an invention of Satan. Before I took my wife, I had made up my mind that I must marry some one; and had I been overtaken by illness I should have betrothed myself to some pious maiden."

He asked nobody's advice. Had he let his intention be suspected, the moderate respectable people—the people who thought like Erasmus—those who wished

well to what was good, but wished also to stand well with the world's opinion—such persons as these would have overwhelmed him with remonstrances. "When you marry," he said to a friend in a similar situation, "be quiet about it, or mountains will rise between you and your wishes. If I had not been swift and secret, I should have had the whole world in my way."

Catherine Bora, the lady whom he chose for his wife, was a nun of good family, left homeless and shelterless by the breaking-up of her convent. She was an ordinary, unimaginative body—plain in person and plain in mind, in no sense whatever a heroine of romance—but a decent, sensible, commonplace Haus Frau.

The age of romance was over with both of them; yet, for all that, never marriage brought a plainer blessing with it. They began with respect, and ended with steady affection.

The happiest life on earth, Luther used to say, is with a pious, good wife; in peace and quiet, contented with a little, and giving God thanks.

He spoke from his own experience. His Katie, as he called her, was not clever, and he had humorous stories to tell of the beginning of their adventures together.

"The first year of married life is an odd business," he says. "At meals, where you used to be alone, you are yourself and somebody else. When you wake in the morning, there are a pair of tails close to you on the pillow. My Katie used to sit with me when I was at work. She thought she ought not to be silent. She did not know what to say, so she would ask me.

"'Herr Doctor, is not the master of the ceremonies in Prussia the brother of the Margrave?'"

She was an odd woman.

"Doctor," she said to him one day, "how is it that under Popery we prayed so often and so earnestly, and now our prayers are cold and seldom?"

Katie might have spoken for herself. Luther, to the last, spent hours of every day in prayer. He advised her to read the Bible a little more. She said she had read enough of it, and knew half of it by heart. "Ah!" he said, "here begins weariness of the word of God. One day new lights will rise up, and the Scriptures will be despised and be flung away into the corner."

His relations with his children were singularly beautiful. The recollection of his own boyhood made him especially gentle with them, and their fancies and imaginations delighted him.

Children, to him, were images of unfallen nature. "Children," he said, "imagine heaven a place where rivers run with cream, and trees are hung with cakes and plums. Do not blame them. They are but showing their simple, natural, unquestioning, all-believing faith."

One day, after dinner, when the fruit was on the table, the children were watching it with longing eyes. "That is the way," he said, "in which we grown Christians ought to look for the Judgment Day."

His daughter Magdalen died when she was fourteen. He speaks of his loss with the unaffected simplicity of natural grief, yet with the faith of a man who had not the slightest doubt into whose hands his treasure was passing. Perfect nature and perfect piety. Neither one emotion nor the other disguised or suppressed.

You will have gathered something, I hope, from these faint sketches, of what Luther was; you will be able to see how far he deserves to be called by our modern new lights, a Philistine or a heretic. We will now return to the subject with which we began, and resume, in a general conclusion, the argument of these Lectures.

In part, but not wholly, it can be done in Luther's words.

One regrets that Luther did not know Erasmus better,

or knowing him, should not have treated him with more forbearance.

Erasmus spoke of him for the most part with kindness. He interceded for him, defended him, and only with the utmost reluctance was driven into controversy with him.

Luther, on the other hand, saw in Erasmus a man who was false to his convictions; who played with truth; who, in his cold, sarcastic scepticism, believed in nothing —scarcely even in God. He was unaware of his own obligations to him, for Erasmus was not a person who would trumpet out his own good deeds.

Thus Luther says:—

"All you who honour Christ, I pray you hate Erasmus. He is a scoffer and a mocker. He speaks in riddles; and jests at Popery and Gospel, and Christ and God, with his uncertain speeches. He might have served the Gospel if he would, but, like Judas, he has betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss. He is not with us, and he is not with our foes; and I say with Joshua, Choose whom ye will serve. He thinks we should trim to the times, and hang our cloaks to the wind. He is himself his own first object; and as he lived, he died.

"I take Erasmus to be the worst enemy that Christ has had for a thousand years. Intellect does not understand religion, and when it comes to the things of God, it laughs at them. He scoffs like Lucian, and by-and-by he will say, Behold, how are these among the saints whose life we counted for folly.

"I bid you, therefore, take heed of Erasmus. He treats theology as a fool's jest, and the Gospel as a fable good for the ignorant to believe."

Of Erasmus personally, much of this was unjust and untrue. Erasmus knew many things which it would have been well for Luther to have known; and, as a man, he was better than his principles.

But if for the name of Erasmus we substitute the theory of human things which Erasmus represented,

between that creed and Luther there is, and must be, an eternal antagonism.

If to be true in heart and just in act are the first qualities necessary for the elevation of humanity—if without these all else is worthless, intellectual culture cannot give what intellectual culture does not require or imply. You cultivate the plant which has already life; you will waste your labour in cultivating a stone. The moral life is the counterpart of the natural, alike mysterious in its origin, and alike visible only in its effects.

Intellectual gifts are like gifts of strength, or wealth, or rank, or worldly power—splendid instruments if nobly used, but requiring qualities to use them nobler and better than themselves.

The rich man may spend his wealth on vulgar luxury. The clever man may live for intellectual enjoyment—refined enjoyment it may be—but enjoyment still, and still centering in self.

If the spirit of Erasmus had prevailed, it would have been with modern Europe as with the Roman Empire in its decay. The educated would have been mere sceptics; the multitude would have been sunk in superstition. In both alike all would have perished which deserves the name of manliness.

And this leads me to the last observation that I have to make to you. In the sciences, the philosopher leads; the rest of us take on trust what he tells us. The spiritual progress of mankind has followed the opposite course. Each forward step has been made first among the people, and the last converts have been among the learned.

The explanation is not far to look for. In the sciences there is no temptation of self-interest to mislead. In matters which affect life and conduct, the interests and prejudices of the cultivated classes are enlisted on the side of the existing order of things, and their better

trained faculties and larger acquirements serve only to find them arguments for believing what they wish to believe.

Simpler men have less to lose; they come more in contact with the realities of life, and they learn wisdom in the experience of suffering.

Thus it was that when the learned and the wise turned away from Christianity, the fishermen of the Galilean lake listened, and a new life began for mankind. A miner's son converted Germany to the Reformation. The London artisans and the peasants of Buckinghamshire went to the stake for doctrines which were accepted afterwards as a second revelation.

So it has been; so it will be to the end. When a great teacher comes again upon the earth, he will find his first disciples where Christ found them and Luther found them. Had Luther written for the learned, the words which changed the face of Europe would have slumbered in impotence on the bookshelves.

In appealing to the German nation, you will agree, I think, with me, that he did well and not ill; you will not sacrifice his great name to the disdain of a shallow philosophy, or to the grimacing of a dead superstition, whose ghost is struggling out of its grave.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON THE SCOTTISH CHARACTER

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT EDINBURGH, NOVEMBER 1865

I HAVE undertaken to speak this evening on the effects of the Reformation in Scotland, and I consider myself a very bold person to have come here on any such undertaking. In the first place, the subject is one with which it is presumptuous for a stranger to meddle. Great national movements can only be understood properly by the people whose disposition they represent. We say ourselves about our own history that only Englishmen can properly comprehend it. The late Chevalier Bunsen once said to me of our own Reformation in England, that, for his part, he could not conceive how we had managed to come by such a thing. We seemed to him to be an obdurate, impenetrable, stupid people, hide-bound by tradition and precedent, and too self-satisfied to be either willing or able to take in new ideas upon any theoretic subject whatever, especially German ideas. That is to say, he could not get inside the English mind. He did not know that some people go furthest and go fastest when they look one way and row the other. It is the same with every considerable nation. They work out their own political and spiritual lives, through tempers, humours, and passions peculiar to themselves; and the same disposition which produces the result is required to interpret it afterwards. This is one reason why I should feel diffident about what I have undertaken. Another is, that I do not conceal from myself that the subject is an exceedingly delicate one. The blazing passions of those stormy sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries are no longer, happily, at their old temperature. The story of those times can now be told or listened to with something like impartiality. Yet, if people no longer hate each other for such matters, the traditions of the struggle survive in strong opinions and sentiments, which it is easy to wound without intending it.

My own conviction with respect to all great social and religious convulsions is the extremely commonplace one that much is to be said on both sides. I believe that nowhere and at no time any such struggle can take place on a scale large unless each party is contending for something which has a great deal of truth in it. Where the right is plain, honest wise and noble-minded men are all on one side; and only rogues and fools are on the other. Where the wise and good are divided, the truth is generally found to be divided also But this is precisely what cannot be admitted as long as the conflict continues. Men begin to fight about things when reason and argument fail to convince them. They make up in passion what is wanting in logic. Each side believes that all the right is theirs—that their enemies have all the bad qualities which their language contains names for; and even now, on the subject on which I have to talk to-night, one has but to take up any magazine, review, newspaper, or party organ of any kind which touches on it, to see that opinion is still Whig or Tory, Cavalier or Roundhead, Protestant or Catholic, as the case may be. The unfortunate person who is neither wholly one nor wholly the other is in the position of Hamlet's "baser nature," "between the incensed points of mighty opposites." He is the Laodicean, neither cold nor hot, whom decent people consider bad company. He pleases no one, and hurts the sensitiveness of all.

Here, then, are good reasons why I should have either not come here at all, or else should have chosen some

other matter to talk about. In excuse for persisting, I can but say that the subject is one about which I have been led by circumstances to read and think considerably; and though, undoubtedly, each of us knows more about himself and his own affairs than anyone else can possibly know, yet a stranger's eye will sometimes see things which escape those more immediately interested; and I allow myself to hope that I may have something to say not altogether undeserving your attention. I shall touch as little as possible on questions of opinion; and if I tread by accident on any sensitive point, I must trust to your kindness to excuse my awkwardness.

Well, then, if we look back on Scotland as it stood in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, we see a country in which the old feudal organisation continued, so far as it generally affected the people, more vigorous than in any other part of civilised Europe. Elsewhere, the growth of trade and of large towns had created a middle class, with an organisation of their own, independent of the lords. In Scotland, the towns were still scanty and poor; such as they were, they were for the most part under the control of the great nobleman who happened to live nearest to them; and a people, as in any sense independent of lords, knights, abbots, or prelates, under whose rule they were born, had as yet no existence. The tillers of the soil (and the soil was very miserably tilled) lived under the shadow of the castle or the monastery. They followed their lord's fortunes, fought his battles, believed in his politics, and supported him loyally in his sins or his good deeds, as the case might be. There was much moral beauty in the life of those times. The loyal attachment of man to man—of liege servant to liege lord—of all forms under which human beings can live and work together, has most of grace and humanity about it. It cannot go on without mutual confidence and affection—mutual benefits given and received. The length of time which the system lasted proves that

in the main there must have been a fine fidelity in the people—truth, justice, generosity in their leaders. History brings down many bad stories to us out of those times; just as in these islands nowadays you may find bad instances of the abuses of rights of property. You may find stories—too many also—of husbands ill-using their wives, and so on. Yet we do not therefore lay the blame on marriage, or suppose that the institution of property on the whole does more harm than good. I do not doubt that down in that feudal system somewhere lie the roots of some of the finest qualities in the European peoples.

So much for the temporal side of the matter; and the spiritual was not very unlike it. As no one lived independently, in our modern sense of the word, so no one thought independently. The minds of men were looked after by a Church which, for a long time also, did, I suppose, very largely fulfil the purpose for which it was intended. It kept alive and active the belief that the world was created and governed by a just Being, who hated sins and crimes, and steadily punished such things. It taught men that they had immortal souls, and that this little bit of life was an entirely insignificant portion of their real existence. It taught these truths, indeed, along with a great deal which we now consider to have been a mistake—a great many theories of earthly things which have since passed away, and special opinions clothed in outward forms and ritual observances which we here, most of us at least, do not think essential for our soul's safety. But mistakes like these are hurtful only when persisted in in the face of fuller truth, after truth has been discovered. Only a very foolish man would now uphold the Ptolemaic astronomy. But the Ptolemaic astronomy, when first invented, was based on real if incomplete observations, and formed a groundwork without which further progress in that science would have been probably im-

possible. The theories and ceremonials of the Catholic Church suited well with an age in which little was known and much was imagined: when superstition was active and science was not yet born. When I am told here or anywhere that the Middle Ages were times of mere spiritual darkness and priestly oppression, with the other usual formulas, I say, as I said before, if the Catholic Church, for those many centuries that it reigned supreme over all men's consciences, was no better than the thing which we see in the generation which immediately preceded the Reformation, it could not have existed at all. You might as well argue that the old fading tree could never have been green and young. Institutions do not live on lies. They either live by the truth and usefulness which there is in them, or they do not live at all.

So things went on for several hundred years. There were scandals enough, and crimes enough, and feuds, and murders, and civil wars. Systems, however good, cannot prevent evil. They can but compress it within moderate and tolerable limits. I should conclude, however, that, measuring by the average happiness of the masses of the people, the mediæval institutions were very well suited for the inhabitants of these countries as they then were. Adam Smith and Bentham themselves could hardly have mended them if they had tried.

But times change, and good things as well as bad grow old and have to die. The heart of the matter which the Catholic Church had taught was the fear of God; but the language of it and the formulas of it were made up of human ideas and notions about things which the mere increase of human knowledge gradually made incredible. To trace the reason of this would lead us a long way. It is intelligible enough, but it would take us into subjects better avoided here. It is enough to say that, while the essence of religion remains the same, the mode in which it is expressed changes and has changed—

changes as living languages change and become dead, as institutions change, as forms of government change, as opinions on all things in heaven and earth change, as half the theories held at this time among ourselves will probably change—that is, the outward and mortal parts of them. Thus the Catholic formulas, instead of living symbols, became dead and powerless cabalistic signs. The religion lost its hold on the conscience and the intellect, and the effect, singularly enough, appeared in the shepherds before it made itself felt among the flocks. From the see of St. Peter to the far monasteries in the Hebrides or the Isle of Arran, the laity were shocked and scandalised at the outrageous doings of high cardinals, prelates, priests, and monks. It was clear enough that these great personages themselves did not believe what they taught; so why should the people believe it? And serious men, to whom the fear of God was a living reality, began to look into the matter for themselves. The first steps everywhere were taken with extreme reluctance; and had the popes and cardinals been wise, they would have taken the lead in the inquiry, cleared their teaching of its lumber, and taken out a new lease of life both for it and for themselves. An infallible pope and an infallible council might have done something in this way, if good sense had been among the attributes of their omniscience. What they did do was something very different. It was as if, when the new astronomy began to be taught, the professors of that science in all the universities of Europe had met together and decided that Ptolemy's cycles and epicycles were eternal verities; that the theory of the rotation of the earth was and must be a damnable heresy; and had invited the civil authorities to help them in putting down by force all doctrines but their own. This, or something very like it, was the position taken up in theology by the Council of Trent. The bishops assembled there did not reason. They decided by vote

that certain things were true, and were to be believed; and the only arguments which they condescended to use were fire and fagot, and so on. How it fared with them, and with this experiment of theirs, we all know tolerably well.

The effect was very different in different countries. Here, in Scotland, the failure was most marked and complete, but the way in which it came about was in many ways peculiar. In Germany, Luther was supported by princes and nobles. In England, the Reformation rapidly mixed itself up with politics and questions of rival jurisdiction. Both in England and Germany, the revolution, wherever it established itself, was accepted early by the Crown or the Government, and by them legally recognised. Here, it was far otherwise: the Protestantism of Scotland was the creation of the commons, as in turn the commons may be said to have been created by Protestantism. There were many young high-spirited men, belonging to the noblest families in the country, who were among the earliest to rally round the Reforming preachers; but authority, both in Church and State, set the other way. The congregations who gathered in the fields around Wishart and John Knox were, for the most part, farmers, labourers, artisans, tradesmen, or the smaller gentry; and thus, for the first time in Scotland, there was created an organisation of men detached from the lords and from the Church—brave, noble, resolute, daring people, bound together by a sacred cause, unrecognised by the leaders whom they had followed hitherto with undoubting allegiance. That spirit which grew in time to be the ruling power of Scotland—that which formed eventually its laws and its creed, and determined its after fortunes as a nation—had its first germ in these half-outlawed wandering congregations. In this it was that the Reformation in Scotland differed from the Reformation in any other part of Europe. Elsewhere

is found a middle class existing—created already by trade or by other causes. It raised and elevated them, but it did not materially affect their political condition. In Scotland, the commons, as an organised body, were simply created by religion. Before the Reformation they had no political existence; and therefore it has been that the print of their origin has gone so deeply into their social constitution. On them, and them only, the burden of the work of the Reformation was eventually thrown; and when they triumphed at last, it was inevitable that both they and it should react one upon the other.

How this came about I must endeavour to describe, although I can give but a brief sketch of an exceedingly complicated matter. Everybody knows the part played by the aristocracy of Scotland in the outward revolution, when the Reformation first became the law of the land. It would seem at first sight as if it had been the work of the whole nation—as if it had been a thing on which high and low were heartily united. Yet on the first glance below the surface you see that the greater part of the noble lords concerned in that business cared nothing about the Reformation at all; or, if they cared, they rather disliked it than otherwise. How, then, did they come to act as they did? or, how came they to permit a change of such magnitude when they had so little sympathy with it? I must make a slight circuit to look for the explanation.

The one essentially noble feature in the great families of Scotland was their patriotism. They loved Scotland and Scotland's freedom with a passion proportioned to the difficulty with which they had defended their liberties; and yet the wisest of them had long seen that, sooner or later, union with England was inevitable; and the question was, how that union was to be brought about—how they were to make sure that, when it came, they should take their place at England's side as equals

and not as a dependency. It had been arranged that the little Mary Stuart should marry our English Edward VI., and the difficulty was to be settled so. They would have been contented, they said, if Scotland had had the "lad" and England the "lass." As it stood, they broke their bargain, and married the little queen away into France, to prevent the Protector Somerset from getting hold of her. Then, however, appeared an opposite danger; the queen would become a Frenchwoman; her French mother governed Scotland with French troops and French ministers; the country would become a French province, and lose its freedom equally. Thus an English party began again; and as England was then in the middle of her great anti-Church revolution, so the Scottish nobles began to be anti-Church. It was not for doctrines: neither they nor their brothers in England cared much about doctrines; but in both countries the Church was rich—much richer than there seemed any occasion for it to be. Harry the Eighth had been sharing among the laity the spoils of the English monasteries; the Scotch Lords saw in a similar process the probability of a welcome addition to their own scanty incomes. Mary of Guise and the French stood by the Church, and the Church stood by them; and so it came about that the great families —even those who, like the Hamiltons, were most closely connected with France—were tempted over by the bait to the other side. They did not want reformed doctrines, but they wanted the Church lands; and so they came to patronise, or endure, the Reformers, because the Church hated them, and because they weakened the Church; and thus for a time, and especially as long as Mary Stuart was Queen of France, all classes in Scotland, high and low, seemed to fraternise in favour of the revolution.

And it seemed as if the union of the realms could be effected at last, at the same juncture, and in connection

with the same movement. Next in succession to the Scotch crown, after Mary Stuart, was the house of Hamilton. Elizabeth, who had just come to the English throne, was supposed to be in want of a husband. The heir of the Hamiltons was of her own age, and in years past had been thought of for her by her father. What could be more fit than to make a match between those two? Send a Scot south to be King of England, find or make some pretext to shake off Mary Stuart, who had forsaken her native country, and so join the crowns, the "lass" and the "lad" being now in the right relative position. Scotland would thus annex her old oppressor, and give her a new dynasty.

I seem to be straying from the point; but these political schemes had so much to do with the actions of the leading men at that time, that the story of the Reformation cannot be understood without them. It was thus, and with these incongruous objects, that the combination was formed which overturned the old Church of Scotland in 1559-60, confiscated its possessions, destroyed its religious houses, and changed its creed. The French were driven away from Leith by Elizabeth's troops; the Reformers took possession of the churches; and the Parliament of 1560 met with a clear stage to determine for themselves the future fate of the country. Now, I think it certain that, if the Scotch nobility, having once accepted the Reformation, had continued loyal to it—especially if Elizabeth had met their wishes in the important point of the marriage—the form of the Scotch Kirk would have been something extremely different from what it in fact became. The people were perfectly well inclined to follow their natural leaders if the matters on which their hearts were set had received tolerable consideration from them, and the democratic form of the ecclesiastical constitution would have been inevitably modified. One of the conditions of the proposed compact with England was the introduction

of the English Liturgy and the English Church constitution. This too, at the outset, and with fair dealing, would not have been found impossible. But it soon became clear that the religious interests of Scotland were the very last thing which would receive consideration from any of the high political personages concerned. John Knox had dreamt of a constitution like that which he had seen working under Calvin at Geneva—a constitution in which the clergy as ministers of God should rule all things—rule politically at the council board, and rule in private at the fireside. It was soon made plain to Knox that Scotland was not Geneva. "Eh, mon," said the younger Maitland to him, "then we may all bear the barrow now to build the House of the Lord." Not exactly. The churches were left to the ministers; the worldly good things and worldly power remained with the laity; and as to religion, circumstances would decide what they would do about that. Again, I am not speaking of all the great men of those times. Glencairn, Ruthven, young Argyll—above all, the Earl of Moray—really did in some degree interest themselves in the Kirk. But what most of them felt was perhaps rather broadly expressed by Maitland when he called religion "a bogle of the nursery." That was the expression which a Scotch statesman of those days actually ventured to use. Had Elizabeth been conformable, no doubt they would in some sense or other have remained on the side of the Reformation. But here, too, there was a serious hitch. Elizabeth would not marry Arran. Elizabeth would be no party to any of their intrigues. She detested Knox. She detested Protestantism entirely, in all shapes in which Knox approved of it. She affronted the nobles on one side, she affronted the people on another; and all idea of uniting the two crowns after the fashion proposed by the Scotch Parliament she utterly and entirely repudiated. She was right enough, per-

haps, so far as this was concerned; but she left the ruling families extremely perplexed as to the course which they would follow. They had allowed the country to be revolutionised in the teeth of their own sovereign, and what to do next they did not very well know.

It was at this crisis that circumstances came in to their help. Francis the Second died. Mary Stuart was left a childless widow. Her connection with the Crown of France was at an end, and all danger on that side to the liberties of Scotland at an end also. The Arran scheme having failed, she would be a second card as good as the first to play for the English Crown—as good as he, or better, for she would have the English Catholics on her side. So, careless how it would affect religion, and making no condition at all about that, the same men who a year before were ready to whistle Mary Stuart down the wind, now invited her back to Scotland; the same men who had been the loudest friends of Elizabeth now encouraged Mary Stuart to persist in the pretension to the Crown of England, which had led to all the past trouble. While in France, she had assumed the title of Queen of England. She had promised to abandon it, but, finding her own people ready to support her in withdrawing her promise, she stood out, insisting that at all events the English Parliament should declare her next in the succession; and it was well known that, as soon as the succession was made sure in her favour, some rascal would be found to put a knife or a bullet into Elizabeth. The object of the Scotch nobles was political, national, patriotic. For religion it was no great matter either way; and as they had before acted with the Protestants, so now they were ready to turn about, and openly or tacitly act with the Catholics. Mary Stuart's friends in England and on the Continent were Catholics, and therefore it would not do to offend them. First, she was allowed to have mass at Holyrood; then there was a move for a broader

toleration. That one mass, Knox said, was more terrible to him than ten thousand armed men landed in the country—and he had perfectly good reason for saying so. He thoroughly understood that it was the first step towards a counter-revolution which in time would cover all Scotland and England, and carry them back to Popery. Yet he preached to deaf ears. Even Murray was so bewitched with the notion of the English succession, that for a year and a half he ceased to speak to Knox; and as it was with Murray, so it was far more with all the rest—their zeal for religion was gone no one knew where. Of course Elizabeth would not give way. She might as well, she said, herself prepare her shroud; and then conspiracies came, and underground intrigues with the Romanist English noblemen. France and Spain were to invade England, Scotland was to open its ports to their fleets, and its soil to their armies, giving them a safe base from which to act, and a dry road over the Marches to London. And if Scotland had remained unchanged from what it had been—had the direction of its fortunes remained with the prince and with the nobles, sooner or later it would have come to this. But suddenly it appeared that there was a new power in this country which no one suspected till it was felt.

The commons of Scotland had hitherto been the creatures of the nobles. They had neither will nor opinion of their own. They thought and acted in the spirit of their immediate allegiance. No one seems to have dreamt that there would be any difficulty in dealing with them if once the great families agreed upon a common course. Yet it appeared, when the pressure came, that religion, which was the plaything of the nobles, was to the people a clear matter of life and death. They might love their country: they might be proud of anything which would add lustre to its crown; but if it was to bring back the Pope and Popery

—if it threatened to bring them back—if it looked that way—they would have nothing to do with it; nor would they allow it to be done. Allegiance was well enough; but there was a higher allegiance suddenly discovered which superseded all earthly considerations. I know nothing finer in Scottish history than the way in which the commons of the Lowlands took their places by the side of Knox in the great convulsions which followed. If all others forsook him, they at least would never forsake him while tongue remained to speak and hand remained to strike. Broken they might have been, trampled out as the Huguenots at last were trampled out in France, had Mary Stuart been less than the most imprudent or the most unlucky of sovereigns. But Providence, or the folly of those with whom they had to deal, fought for them. I need not follow the wild story of the crimes and catastrophes in which Mary Stuart's short reign in Scotland closed. Neither is her own share, be it great or small, or none at all, in those crimes of any moment to us here. It is enough that, both before that strange business and after it, when at Holyrood or across the Border, in Sheffield or Tutbury, her ever favourite dream was still the English throne. Her road towards it was through a Catholic revolution and the murder of Elizabeth. It is enough that, both before and after, the aristocracy of Scotland, even those among them who had seemed most zealous for the Reformation, were eager to support her. John Knox alone, and the commons, whom Knox had raised into a political power, remained true.

Much, indeed, is to be said for the Scotch nobles. In the first shock of the business at Kirk-o'-Field, they forgot their politics in a sense of national disgrace. They sent the queen to Loch Leven. They intended to bring her to trial, and, if she was proved guilty, to expose and perhaps punish her. All parties for a time agreed in this—even the Hamiltons themselves; and

had they been left alone they would have done it. But they had a perverse neighbour in England, to whom crowned heads were sacred. Elizabeth, it might have been thought, would have had no particular objection; but Elizabeth had aims of her own which baffled calculation. Elizabeth, the representative of revolution, yet detested revolutionists. The Reformers in Scotland, the Huguenots in France, the insurgents in the United Provinces, were the only friends she had in Europe. For her own safety she was obliged to encourage them; yet she hated them all, and would at any moment have abandoned them all, if, in any other way, she could have secured herself. She might have conquered her personal objection to Knox—she could not conquer her aversion to a Church which rose out of revolt against authority, which was democratic in constitution and republican in politics. When driven into alliance with the Scotch Protestants, she angrily and passionately disclaimed any community of creed with them; and for subjects to sit in judgment on their prince was a precedent which she would not tolerate. Thus she flung her mantle over Mary Stuart. She told the Scotch Council here in Edinburgh that, if they hurt a hair of her head, she would harry their country, and hang them all on the trees round the town, if she could find any trees there for that purpose. She tempted the queen to England with her fair promises after the battle of Langside, and then, to her astonishment, imprisoned her. Yet she still shielded her reputation, still fostered her party in Scotland, still incessantly threatened and incessantly endeavoured to restore her. She kept her safe, because, in her lucid intervals, her ministers showed her the madness of acting otherwise. Yet for three years she kept her own people in a fever of apprehension. She made a settled Government in Scotland impossible; till, distracted and perplexed, the Scottish statesmen went back to their first schemes. They assured them-

selves that in one way or other the Queen of Scots would sooner or later come again among them. They, and others besides them, believed that Elizabeth was cutting her own throat, and that the best that they could do was to recover their own queen's favour, and make the most of her and her titles; and so they lent themselves again to the English Catholic conspiracies.

The Earl of Moray—the one supremely noble man then living in the country—was put out of the way by an assassin. French and Spanish money poured in, and French and Spanish armies were to be again invited over to Scotland. This is the form in which the drama unfolds itself in the correspondence of the time. Maitland, the soul and spirit of it all, said, in scorn, that "he would make the Queen of England sit upon her tail and whine like a whipped dog." The only powerful noblemen who remained on the Protestant side were Lennox, Morton, and Mar. Lord Lennox was a poor creature, and was soon dispatched; Mar was old and weak; and Morton was an unprincipled scoundrel, who used the Reformation only as a stalking-horse to cover the spoils which he had clutched in the confusion, and was ready to desert the cause at any moment if the balance of advantage shifted. Even the ministers of the Kirk were fooled and flattered over. Maitland told Mary Stuart that he had gained them all except one.

John Knox alone defied both his threats and his persuasions. Good reason has Scotland to be proud of Knox. He only, in this wild crisis, saved the Kirk which he had founded, and saved with it Scottish and English freedom. But for Knox, and what he was able still to do, it is almost certain that the Duke of Alva's army would have been landed on the eastern coast. The conditions were drawn out and agreed upon for the reception, the support, and the stay of the Spanish troops. Two-thirds of the English peerage

had bound themselves to rise against Elizabeth, and Alva waited only till Scotland itself was quiet. Only that quiet would not be. Instead of quiet came three dreadful years of civil war. Scotland was split into factions, to which the mother and the son gave names. The queen's lords, as they were called, with unlimited money from France and Flanders, held Edinburgh and Glasgow; all the border line was theirs, and all the north and west. Elizabeth's Council, wiser than their mistress, barely squeezed out of her reluctant parsimony enough to keep Mar and Morton from making terms with the rest; but there her assistance ended. She would still say nothing, promise nothing, bind herself to nothing, and, so far as she was concerned, the war would have been soon enough brought to a close. But away at St. Andrews, John Knox, broken in body, and scarcely able to stagger up the pulpit stairs, still thundered in the parish church; and his voice, it was said, was like ten thousand trumpets braying in the ear of Scottish Protestantism. All the Lowlands answered to his call. Our English Cromwell found in the man of religion a match for the man of honour. Before Cromwell, all over the Lothians, and across from St. Andrews to Stirling and Glasgow—through farm, and town, and village—the words of Knox had struck the inmost chords of the Scottish commons' hearts. Passing over knight and noble, he had touched the farmer, the peasant, the petty tradesman, and the artisan, and turned the men of clay into men of steel. The village preacher, when he left his pulpit, doffed cap and cassock, and donned morion and steel-coat. The Lothian yeoman's household became for the nonce a band of troopers, who would cross swords with the night riders of Buccleuch. It was a terrible time, a time rather of anarchy than of defined war, for it was without form or shape. Yet the horror of it was everywhere. Houses and villages were burned, and women and children

tossed on pike-point into the flames. Strings of poor men were dangled day after day from the walls of Edinburgh Castle. A word any way from Elizabeth would have ended it, but that word Elizabeth would never speak; and, maddened with suffering, the people half believed that she was feeding the fire for her own bad purposes, when it was only that she would not make up her mind to allow a crowned princess to be dethroned. No earthly influence could have held men true in such a trial. The noble lords—the Earl of Morton and such-like—would have made their own conditions, and gone with the rest; but the vital force of the Scotch nation, showing itself where it was least looked for, would not have it so.

A very remarkable account of the state of the Scotch commons at this time is to be found in a letter of an English emissary, who had been sent by Lord Burleigh to see how things were going there. It was not merely a new creed that they had got; it was a new vital power. "You would be astonished to see how men are changed here," this writer said. "There is little of that submission to those above them which there used to be. The poor think and act for themselves. They are growing strong, confident, independent. The farms are better cultivated; the farmers are growing rich. The merchants at Leith are thriving, and, notwithstanding the pirates, they are increasing their ships and opening a brisk trade with France."

All this while civil war was raging, and the flag of Queen Mary was still floating over Edinburgh Castle. It surprised the English; still more it surprised the politicians. It was the one thing which disconcerted, baffled, and finally ruined the schemes and the dreams of Maitland. When he had gained the aristocracy, he thought that he had gained everybody, and, as it turned out, he had all his work still to do. The Spaniards did not come. The prudent Alva would

not risk invasion till Scotland at least was assured. As time passed on, the English conspiracies were discovered and broken up. The Duke of Norfolk lost his head; the Queen of Scots was found to have been mixed up with the plots to murder Elizabeth; and Elizabeth at last took courage and recognised James. Supplies of money ceased to come from abroad, and gradually the tide turned. The Protestant cause once more grew towards the ascendant. The great families one by one came round again; and, as the backward movement began, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew gave it a fresh and tremendous impulse. Even the avowed Catholics—the Hamiltons, the Gordons, the Scotts, the Kers, the Maxwells—quailed before the wail of rage and sorrow which at that great horror rose over their country. The Queen's party dwindled away to a handful of desperate politicians, who still clung to Edinburgh Castle. But Elizabeth's "peace-makers," as the big English cannon were called, came round, at the Regent's request, from Berwick; David's tower, as Knox had long ago foretold, "ran down over the cliff like a sandy brae;" and the cause of Mary Stuart in Scotland was extinguished for ever. Poor Grange, who deserved a better end, was hanged at the Market Cross. Secretary Maitland, the cause of all the mischief—the cleverest man, as far as intellect went, in all Britain—died (so later rumour said) by his own hand. A nobler version of his end is probably a truer one: He had been long ill—so ill that when the Castle cannon were fired, he had been carried into the cellars as unable to bear the sound. The breaking down of his hopes finished him. "The secretary," wrote some one from the spot to Cecil, "is dead of grief, being unable to endure the great hatred which all this people bears towards him." It would be well if some competent man would write a life of Maitland, or at least edit his papers. They contain by far the clearest account of the inward movements of the

time; and he himself is one of the most tragically interesting characters in the cycle of the Reformation history.

With the fall of the Castle, then, but not till then, it became clear to all men that the Reformation would hold its ground. It was the final trampling out of the fire which for five years had threatened both England and Scotland with flames and ruin. For five years—as late certainly as the massacre of St. Bartholomew—those who understood best the true state of things, felt the keenest misgivings how the event would turn. That things ended as they did was due to the spirit of the Scotch commons. There was a moment when, if they had given way, all would have gone, perhaps even to Elizabeth's throne. They had passed for nothing; they had proved to be everything; had proved—the ultimate test in human things—to be the power which could hit the hardest blows, and they took rank accordingly. The creed began now in good earnest to make its way into hall and castle; but it kept the form which it assumed in the first hours of its danger and trial, and never after lost it. Had the aristocracy dealt sincerely with things in the earlier stages of the business, again I say the democratic element in the Kirk might have been softened or modified. But the Protestants had been trifled with by their own natural leaders. Used and abused by Elizabeth, despised by the worldly intelligence and power of the times—they triumphed after all, and, as a natural consequence, they set their own mark and stamp upon the fruits of the victory.

The question now is, what has the Kirk so established done for Scotland? Has it justified its own existence? Briefly, we might say, it has continued its first function as the guardian of Scottish freedom. But that is a vague phrase, and there are special accusations against the Kirk and its doctrines which imply that it has cared for other things than freedom. Narrow, fanatical,

dictatorial, intrusive, superstitious, a spiritual despotism, the old priesthood over again with a new face—these and other such epithets and expressions we have heard often enough applied to it at more than one stage of its history. Well, I suppose that neither the Kirk nor anything else of man's making is altogether perfect. But let us look at the work which lay before it when it had got over its first perils. Scotch patriotism succeeded at last in the object it had so passionately set its heart upon. It sent a king at last of the Scotch blood to England, and a new dynasty; and it never knew peace or quiet after. The Kirk had stood between James Stuart and his kingcraft. He hated it as heartily as did his mother; and, when he got to England, he found people there who told him it would be easy to destroy it, and he found the strength of a fresh empire to back him in trying to do it. To have forced prelacy upon Scotland would have been to destroy the life out of Scotland. Thrust upon them by force, it would have been no more endurable than Popery. They would as soon, perhaps sooner, have had what the Irish call the "rale thing" back again. The political freedom of the country was now wrapped up in the Kirk; and the Stuarts were perfectly well aware of that, and for that very reason began their crusade against it.

And now, suppose the Kirk had been the broad, liberal, philosophical, intellectual thing which some people think it ought to have been, how would it have fared in that crusade; how altogether would it have encountered those surplices of Archbishop Laud or those dragoons of Claverhouse? It is hard to lose one's life for a "perhaps;" and philosophical belief at the bottom means a "perhaps," and nothing more. For more than half the seventeenth century, the battle had to be fought out in Scotland, which in reality was the battle between liberty and despotism; and where, except in an intense burning conviction that they were

maintaining God's cause against the devil, could the poor Scotch people have found the strength for the unequal struggle which was forced upon them? Toleration is a good thing in its place; but you cannot tolerate what will not tolerate you, and is trying to cut your throat. Enlightenment you cannot have enough of, but it must be true enlightenment, which sees a thing in all its bearings. In these matters the vital questions are not always those which appear on the surface; and in the passion and resolution of brave and noble men there is often an inarticulate intelligence deeper than what can be expressed in words. Action sometimes will hit the mark, when the spoken word either misses it or is but half the truth. On such subjects, and with common men, latitude of mind means weakness of mind. There is but a certain quantity of spiritual force in any man. Spread it over a broad surface, the stream is shallow and languid; narrow the channel, and it becomes a driving force. Each may be well at its own time. The mill-race which drives the water-wheel is dispersed in rivulets over the meadow at its foot. The Covenanters fought the fight and won the victory, and then, and not till then, came the David Humes with their essays on miracles, and the Adam Smiths with their political economies, and steam-engines, and railroads, and philosophical institutions, and all the other blessed or unblessed fruits of liberty.

But we may go further. Institutions exist for men, not men for institutions; and the ultimate test of any system of politics, or body of opinions, or form of belief, is the effect produced on the conduct and condition of the people who live and die under them. Now, I am not here to speak of Scotland of the present day. That, happily, is no business of mine. We have to do here with Scotland before the march of intellect; with Scotland of the last two centuries; with the three or four hundred thousand families who for half-a-score

of generations believed simply and firmly in the principles of the Reformation, and walked in the ways of it.

Looked at broadly, one would say they had been an eminently pious people. It is part of the complaint of modern philosophers about them, that religion, or superstition, or whatever they please to call it, had too much to do with their daily lives. So far as one can look into that commonplace round of things which historians never tell us about, there have rarely been seen in this world a set of people who have thought more about right and wrong, and the judgment about them of the upper powers. Long-headed, thrifty industry,—a sound hatred of waste, imprudence, idleness, extravagance,—the feet planted firmly upon the earth,—a conscientious sense that the worldly virtues are, nevertheless, very necessary virtues, that without these, honesty for one thing is not possible, and that without honesty no other excellence, religious or moral, is worth anything at all—this is the stuff of which Scotch life was made, and very good stuff it is. It has been called gloomy, austere, harsh, and such other epithets. A gifted modern writer has favoured us lately with long strings of extracts from the sermons of Scotch divines of the last century, taking hard views of human shortcomings and their probable consequences and passing hard censures upon the world and its amusements. Well, no doubt amusement is a very good thing; but I should rather infer from the vehemence and frequency of these denunciations that the people had not been in the habit of denying themselves too immoderately; and, after all, it is no very hard charge against those teachers that they thought more of duty than of pleasure. Sermons always exaggerate the theoretic side of things; and the most austere preacher, when he is out of the pulpit, and you meet him at the dinner-table, becomes singularly like other people. We may take courage, I think, we may believe safely that in those minister-

ridden days, men were not altogether so miserable; we may hope that no large body of human beings have for any length of time been too dangerously afraid of enjoyment. Among other good qualities, the Scots have been distinguished for humour—not for venomous wit, but for kindly, genial humour, which half loves what it laughs at—and this alone shows clearly enough that those to whom it belongs have not looked too exclusively on the gloomy side of the world. I should rather say that the Scots had been an unusually happy people. Intelligent industry, the honest doing of daily work, with a sense that it must be done well, under penalties; the necessaries of life moderately provided for; and a sensible content with the situation of life in which men are born—this through the week, and at the end of it the "Cottar's Saturday Night"—the homely family, gathered reverently and peacefully together, and irradiated with a sacred presence.—Happiness! such happiness as we human creatures are likely to know upon this world, will be found there, if anywhere.

The author of the *History of Civilisation* makes a naïve remark in connection with this subject. Speaking of the other country, which he censures equally with Scotland for its slavery to superstition, he says of the Spaniards that they are a well-natured, truthful, industrious, temperate, pious people, innocent in their habits, affectionate in their families, full of humour, vivacity, and shrewdness, yet that all this "has availed them nothing"—"has availed them nothing," that is his expression—because they are loyal, because they are credulous, because they are contented, because they have not apprehended the first commandment of the new covenant: "Thou shalt get on and make money, and better thy condition in life;" because, therefore, they have added nothing to the scientific knowledge, the wealth, and the progress of mankind. Without

these, it seems, the old-fashioned virtues avail nothing. They avail a great deal to human happiness. Applied science, and steam, and railroads, and machinery, enable an ever-increasing number of people to live upon the earth; but the happiness of those people remains, so far as I know, dependent very much on the old conditions. I should be glad to believe that the new views of things will produce effects upon the character in the long run half so beautiful.

There is much more to say on this subject, were there time to say it, but I will not trespass too far upon your patience; and I would gladly have ended here, had not the mention of Spain suggested one other topic, which I should not leave unnoticed. The Spain of Cervantes and Don Quixote was the Spain of the Inquisition. The Scotland of Knox and Melville was the Scotland of the witch trials and witch burnings. The belief in witches was common to all the world. The prosecution and punishment of the poor creatures was more conspicuous in Scotland when the Kirk was most powerful; in England and New England, when Puritan principles were also dominant there. It is easy to understand the reasons. Evil of all kinds was supposed to be the work of a personal devil; and in the general horror of evil, this particular form of it, in which the devil was thought especially active, excited the most passionate detestation. Thus, even the best men lent themselves unconsciously to the most detestable cruelty. Knox himself is not free from reproach. A poor woman was burned at St. Andrews when he was living there, and when a word from him would have saved her. It remains a lesson to all time, that goodness, though the indispensable adjunct to knowledge, is no substitute for it; that when conscience undertakes to dictate beyond its province, the result is only the more monstrous.

It is well that we should look this matter in the face;

and as particular stories leave more impression than general statements, I will mention one, perfectly well authenticated, which I take from the official report of the proceedings:—Towards the end of 1593 there was trouble in the family of the Earl of Orkney. His brother laid a plot to murder him, and was said to have sought the help of a "notorious witch" called Alison Balfour. When Alison Balfour's life was looked into, no evidence could be found connecting her either with the particular offence or with witchcraft in general; but it was enough in these matters to be accused. She swore she was innocent; but her guilt was only held to be aggravated by perjury. She was tortured again and again. Her legs were put in the caschilaws—an iron frame which was gradually heated till it burned into the flesh—but no confession could be wrung from her. The caschilaws failed utterly, and something else had to be tried. She had a husband, a son, and a daughter, a child seven years old. As her own sufferings did not work upon her, she might be touched, perhaps, by the sufferings of those who were dear to her. They were brought into court, and placed at her side; and the husband first was placed in the "lang irons"—some accursed instrument; I know not what. Still the devil did not yield. She bore this; and her son was next operated on. The boy's legs were set in "the boot,"—the iron boot you may have heard of. The wedges were driven in, which, when forced home, crushed the very bone and marrow. Fifty-seven mallet strokes were delivered upon the wedges. Yet this, too, failed. There was no confession yet. So, last of all, the little daughter was taken. There was a machine called the piniwinkies—a kind of thumbscrew, which brought blood from under the finger-nails, with a pain successfully terrible. These things were applied to the poor child's hands, and the mother's constancy broke down, and she said she would admit anything they wished.

She confessed her witchcraft—so tried, she would have confessed to the seven deadly sins—and then she was burned, recalling her confession, and with her last breath protesting her innocence.

It is due to the intelligence of the time to admit that after this her guilt was doubted, and such vicarious means of extorting confessions do not seem to have been tried again. Yet the men who inflicted these tortures would have borne them all themselves sooner than have done any act they consciously knew to be wrong. They did not know that the instincts of humanity were more sacred than the logic of theology, and in fighting against the devil they were themselves doing the devil's work. We should not attempt to apologise for these things, still less to forget them. No martyrs ever suffered to instil into mankind a more wholesome lesson—more wholesome, or one more hard to learn. The more conscientious men are, the more difficult it is for them to understand that in their most cherished convictions, when they pass beyond the limits where the wise and good of all sorts agree, they may be the victims of mere delusion. Yet, after all, and happily, such cases were but few, and affected but lightly the general condition of the people.

The student running over the records of other times finds certain salient things standing out in frightful prominence. He concludes that the substance of those times was made up of the matters most dwelt on by the annalist. He forgets that the things most noticed are not those of every-day experience, but the abnormal, the extraordinary, the monstrous. The exceptions are noted down, the common and usual is passed over in silence. The philosophic historian, studying hereafter this present age, in which we are ourselves living, may say that it was a time of unexampled prosperity, luxury, and wealth; but catching at certain horrible murders which have lately disgraced our civilisation, may call us a

nation of assassins. It is to invert the pyramid and stand it on its point. The same system of belief which produced the tragedy which I have described, in its proper province as the guide of ordinary life, has been the immediate cause of all that is best and greatest in Scottish character

CRITICISM AND THE GOSPEL HISTORY[1]

THE spirit of criticism is not the spirit of religion. The spirit of criticism is a questioning spirit; the spirit of religion is a spirit of faith, of humility and submission. Other qualities may go to the formation of a religious character in the highest and grandest sense of the word; but the virtues which religious teachers most generally approve, which make up the ideal of a Catholic saint, which the Catholic and all other churches endeavour most to cultivate in their children, are those of passive and loyal obedience, a devotion without reserve or qualification; or to use the technical word, "a spirit of teachableness." A religious education is most successful when it has formed a mind to which difficulties are welcome as an opportunity for the triumph of faith—which regards doubts as temptations to be resisted like the suggestions of sensuality, and which alike in action or opinion follows the path prescribed to it with affectionate and unhesitating confidence.

To men or women of the tender and sensitive piety which is produced by such a training, an inquiry into the grounds of its faith appears shocking and profane. To demand an explanation of ambiguities or mysteries of which they have been accustomed to think only upon their knees, is as it were to challenge the Almighty to explain his ways to his creatures, and to refuse obedience unless human presumption has been first gratified.

Undoubtedly, not in religion only, but in any branch of human knowledge, teachableness is the condition of growth. We augur ill for the future of the youth who sets his own judgment against that of his instructors,

[1] *Fraser's Magazine*, 1864.

and refuses to believe what cannot be at once made plain to him. Yet again, the wise instructor will not lightly discourage questions which are prompted by an intelligent desire of knowledge. That an uninquiring submission produces characters of great and varied beauty; that it has inspired the most splendid acts of endurance which have given a lustre to humanity, no one will venture to deny. A genial faith is one of that group of qualities which commend themselves most to the young, the generous, and the enthusiastic—to those whose native and original nobleness has suffered least from contact with the world—which belong rather to the imagination than the reason, and stand related to truth through the emotions rather than through the sober calculations of probability. It is akin to loyalty, to enthusiasm, to hero-worship, to that deep affection to a person or a cause which can see no fault in what it loves.

"Belief," says Mr. Sewell, "is a virtue; doubt is a sin." Iago is nothing if not critical; and the sceptical spirit—*der Geist der stets verneint*—which is satisfied with nothing, which sees in everything good the seed of evil, and the weak spot in every great cause or nature, has been made the special characteristic—we all feel with justice—of the devil.

And yet this devotedness or devotion, this reverence for authority, is but one element of excellence. To reverence is good; but on the one condition that the object of it be a thing which deserves reverence; and the necessary complement, the security that we are not bestowing our best affections where they should not be given, must be looked for in some quality which, if less attractive, is no less essential for our true welfare. To prove all things—to try the spirits whether they be of God—is a duty laid upon us by the highest authority; and what is called progress in human things—religious as well as material—has been due uniformly to a dissatisfaction with them as they are. Every advance in

science, every improvement in the command of the mechanical forces of nature, every step in political or social freedom, has risen in the first instance from an act of scepticism, from an uncertainty whether the formulas, or the opinions, or the government, or the received practical theories were absolutely perfect; or whether beyond the circle of received truths there might not lie something broader, deeper, truer, and thus better deserving the acceptance of mankind.

Submissiveness, humility, obedience, produce if uncorrected, in politics a nation of slaves, whose baseness becomes an incentive to tyranny; in religion, they produce the consecration of falsehood, poperies, immaculate conceptions, winking images, and the confessional. The spirit of inquiry if left to itself becomes in like manner a disease of uncertainty, and terminates in universal scepticism. It seems as if in a healthy order of things, to the willingness to believe there should be chained as its inseparable companion a jealousy of deception; and there is no lesson more important for serious persons to impress upon themselves than that each of these temperaments must learn to tolerate the other; faith accepting from reason the sanction of its service, and reason receiving in return the warm pulsations of life. The two principles exist together in the highest natures; and the man who in the best sense of the word is devout, is also the most cautious to whom or to what he pays his devotion. Among the multitude, the units of which are each inadequate and incomplete, the elements are disproportionately mixed; some men are humble and diffident, some are sceptical and inquiring; yet both are filling a place in the great intellectual economy; both contribute to make up the sum and proportion of qualities which are required to hold the balance even; and neither party is entitled to say to the other, "Stand by; I am holier than thou."

And as it is with individuals, so is it also with whole

periods and cycles. For centuries together the believing spirit held undisputed sovereignty; and these were what are called "ages of faith;" ages, that is, in which the highest business of the intellect was to pray rather than to investigate; when for every unusual phenomenon a supernatural cause was instinctively assumed; when wonders were credible in proportion to their magnitude; and theologians, with easy command of belief, added miracle to miracle and piled dogma upon dogma. Then the tide changed; a fresh era opened, which in the eyes of those who considered the old system the only right one, was the letting loose of the impersonated spirit of evil; when profane eyes were looking their idols in the face; when men were saying to the miraculous images, "You are but stone and wood," and to the piece of bread, "You are but dust as I am dust;" and then the huge mediæval fabric crumbled down in ruin.

All forms of thought, all objects of devotion, are made thus liable to perpetual revision, if only that belief shall not petrify into habit, but remain the reasonable conviction of a reasonable soul. The change of times and the change of conditions change also the appearance of things which in themselves are the same which they always were. Facts supposed once to be as fixed as the stars melt into fiction. A closer acquaintance with the phenomena of experience has revealed to us the action of forces before undreamt of working throughout nature with unerring uniformity; and to the mediæval stories of magic, witchcraft, or the miracles of saints, we are thus placed in a new relation. The direct evidence on which such stories were received may remain unimpaired, but it no longer produces the same conviction. Even in ordinary human things where the evidence is lost—as in some of our own State trials, and where we know only that it was such as brought conviction to judges, juries, and parliaments—historians do not hesitate to call their verdicts into question, thinking

it more likely that whole masses of men should have been led away by passion or fraud or cowardice than that this or that particular crime should have been committed. That we often go beyond our office and exaggerate the value of our new criteria of truth may be possible enough; but it is no less certain that this is the tendency of modern thought. Our own age, like every age which has gone before it, judges the value of testimony, not by itself merely, but by the degree to which it corresponds with our own sense of the laws of probability; and we consider events probable or improbable by the habit of mind which is the result of our general knowledge and culture. To the Catholic of the middle ages a miracle was more likely than not; and when he was told that a miracle had been worked, he believed it as he would have believed had he been told that a shower of rain had fallen, or that the night frost had killed the buds upon his fruit trees. If his cattle died, he found the cause in the malice of Satan or the evil eye of a witch; and if two or more witnesses could have been found to swear that they had heard an old woman curse him, she would have been burnt for a sorceress. The man of science, on the other hand, knows nothing of witches and sorcerers; when he can find a natural cause he refuses to entertain the possibility of the intervention of a cause beyond nature; and thus that very element of marvel which to the more superstitious temperament was an evidence of truth, becomes to the better informed a cause of suspicion.

So it has been that throughout history, as between individuals among ourselves, we trace two habits of thought, one of which has given us churches, creeds, and the knowledge of God; the other has given us freedom and science, has pruned the luxuriance of imaginative reverence, and reminds piety of what it is too ready to forget—that God is truth. Yet, essential as they are to one another, each keeps too absolutely

to the circle of its own convictions, and, but half able to recognise the merit of principles which are alien to its own, regards the other as its natural enemy.

To the warm and enthusiastic pietist the inquirer appears as a hater of God, an inveterate blasphemer of holy things, soiling with rude and insolent hands what ought only to be humbly adored. The saint when he has the power calls the sword to his aid, and in his zeal for what he calls the honour of God, makes war upon such people with steel and fire. The innovator, on the other hand, knowing that he is not that evil creature which his rival represents him as being, knowing that he too desires only truth—first suffers, suffers in rough times at stake and scaffold, suffers in our own later days in good name, in reputation, in worldly fortune; and as the whirligig of time brings round his turn of triumph, takes, in French revolutions and such other fits of madness, his own period of wild revenge. The service of truth is made to appear as one thing, the service of God as another; and in that fatal separation religion dishonours itself with unavailing enmity to what nevertheless it is compelled at last to accept in humiliation; and science, welcoming the character which its adversary flings upon it, turns away with answering hostility from doctrines without which its own highest achievements are but pyramids of ashes.

Is this antagonism a law of humanity? As mankind move upwards through the ascending circles of progress, is it for ever to be with them as with the globe which they inhabit—of which one hemisphere is perpetually dark? Have the lessons of the Reformation been thrown away? Is knowledge always to advance under the ban of religion? Is faith never to cease to dread investigation? Is science chiefly to value each new discovery as a victory gained over its rival? Is the spiritual world to revolve eternally upon an axis of which the

two poles are materialism and superstition, to be buried in their alternate occultations in periods of utter darkness, or lifted into an icy light where there is neither life nor warmth?

How it may be in the remote future it is idle to guess; for the present the signs are not hopeful. We are arrived visibly at one of those recurring times when the accounts are called in for audit; when the title-deeds are to be looked through, and established opinions again tested. It is a process which has been repeated more than once in the world's history; the last occasion and greatest being the Reformation of the sixteenth century; and the experience of that matter might have satisfied the most timid that truth has nothing to fear; and that religion emerges out of such trials stronger and brighter than before. Yet Churchmen have not profited by the experience; the pulpits and the religious press ring again with the old shrieks of sacrilege; the machinery of the law courts is set creaking on its rusty hinges, and denunciation and anathema in the old style take the place of reasoning. It will not answer; and the worst danger to what is really true is the want of wisdom in its defenders. The language which we sometimes hear about these things seems to imply that while Christianity is indisputably true, it cannot stand nevertheless without bolt and shackle, as if the Author of our faith had left the evidence so weak that an honest investigation would fail to find it.

Inevitably, the altered relation in which modern culture places the minds of all of us towards the supernatural, will compel a reconsideration of the grounds on which the acceptance of miracles is required. If the English learned clergy had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they would be the first to take possession of the field; they would look the difficulty in the face fearlessly and frankly, and we should not be tossing as we are now in an ocean of uncertainty, ignorant whether,

if things seem obscure to us, the fault is with our intellects or our hearts.

It might have been that Providence, anticipating the effect produced on dead testimony by time and change, had raised religion into a higher sphere, and had appointed on earth a living and visible authority which could not err—guided by the Holy Spirit into truth, and divinely sustained in the possession of it. Such a body the Roman Catholic Church conceives itself to be; but in breaking away from its communion, Protestant Christians have declared their conviction that neither the Church of Rome, nor they themselves, nor any other body of men on earth, are exempt from a liability to error. It is no longer competent for the Anglican communion to say that a doctrine or a fact is true because it forms a part of their teaching, because it has come down to them from antiquity, and because to deny it is sin. Transubstantiation came down to the fathers of the Reformation from antiquity; it was received and insisted upon by the Catholic Church of Christendom; yet nevertheless it was flung out from among us as a lie and an offence. The theory of the Divine authority of the Church was abandoned in the act of Protestantism three centuries ago; it was the central principle of that great revolt that the establishment of particular opinions was no guarantee for their truth; and it becomes thus our duty as well as our right to examine periodically our intellectual defences, to abandon positions which the alteration of time makes untenable, and to admit and invite into the service of the sanctuary the fullest light of advancing knowledge. Of all positions the most fatally suicidal for Protestants to occupy is the assumption, which it is competent for Roman Catholics to hold, but not for them, that beliefs once sanctioned by the Church are sacred, and that to impugn them is not error but crime.

With a hope, then, that this reproach may be taken

away from us; that, in this most wealthily-endowed Church of England, where so many of the most gifted and most accomplished men among us are maintained in well-paid leisure to attend to such things, we may not be left any longer to grope our way in the dark, the present writer puts forward some few perplexities of which it would be well if English divinity contained a clearer solution than is found there. The laity, occupied in other matters, regard the clergy as the trustees of their spiritual interests; but inasmuch as the clergy tell them that the safety of their souls depends on the correctness of their opinions, they dare not close their eyes to the questions which are being asked in louder and even louder tones; and they have a right to demand that they shall not be left to their own unaided efforts to answer such questions. We go to our appointed teachers as to our physicians; we say to them, "We feel pain here, and here, and here: we do not see our way, and we require you to help us."

Most of these perplexities are not new: they were felt with the first beginnings of critical investigation; but the fact that they have been so many years before the world without being satisfactorily encountered makes the situation only the more serious. It is the more strange that as time passes on, and divine after divine is raised to honour and office for his theological services, we should find only when we turn to their writings that loud promises end in no performance; that the chief object which they set before themselves is to avoid difficult ground; and that the points on which we most cry out for satisfaction are passed over in silence, or are disposed of with ineffectual commonplaces.

With a temperament constitutionally religious, and with an instinctive sense of the futility of theological controversies, the English people have long kept the enemy at bay by passive repugnance. To the well-

conditioned English layman the religion in which he has been educated is part of the law of the land; the truth of it is assumed in the first principles of his personal and social existence; and attacks on the credibility of his sacred books he has regarded with the same impatience and disdain with which he treats speculations on the rights of property or the common maxims of right and wrong. Thus, while the inspiration of the Bible has been a subject of discussion for a century in Germany, Holland, and France; while even in the desolate villages in the heart of Spain the priests find it necessary to placard the church walls with cautions against rationalism, England hitherto has escaped the trial; and it is only within a very few years that the note of speculation has compelled our deaf ears to listen. That it has come at last is less a matter of surprise than that it should have been so long delayed; and though slow to move, it is likely that so serious a people will not now rest till they have settled the matter for themselves in some practical way. We are assured that if the truth be, as we are told, of vital moment—vital to all alike, wise and foolish, educated and uneducated—the road to it cannot lie through any very profound inquiries. We refuse to believe that every labourer or mechanic must balance arduous historical probabilities and come to a just conclusion, under pain of damnation. We are satisfied that these poor people are not placed in so cruel a dilemma. Either these abstruse historical questions are open questions, and we are not obliged under those penalties to hold a definite opinion upon them, or else there must be some general principle accessible and easily intelligible, by which the details can be summarily disposed of.

We shall not be much mistaken, perhaps, if we say that the view of most educated English laymen at present is something of this kind. They are aware that many questions may be asked, difficult or impossible

to answer satisfactorily, about the creation of the world, the flood, and generally on the historical portion of the Old Testament; but they suppose that if the authority of the Gospel history can be well ascertained, the rest may and must be taken for granted. If it be true that of the miraculous birth, life, death and resurrection of our Lord, we have the evidence of two evangelists who were eye-witnesses of the facts which they relate, and of two others who wrote under the direction of, or upon the authority of, eye-witnesses, we can afford to dispense with merely curious inquiries. The subordinate parts of a divine economy which culminated in so stupendous a mystery may well be as marvellous as itself; and it may be assumed, we think, with no great want of charity, that those who doubt the truth of the Old Testament extend their incredulity to the New; that the point of their disbelief, towards which they are trenching their way through the weak places in the Pentateuch, is the Gospel narrative itself.[1] Whatever difficulty there may be in proving the ancient Hebrew books to be the work of the writers whose names they bear, no one would have cared to challenge their genuineness who was thoroughly convinced of the resurrection of our Lord. And the real object of these speculations lies open before us in the now notorious work of M. Renan, which is shooting through Europe with a rapidity which recalls the era of Luther.

To the question of the authenticity of the Gospels, therefore, the common sense of Englishmen has instinctively turned. If, as English commentators confidently tell us, the Gospel of St. Matthew, such as we now possess it, is undoubtedly the work of the publican who followed our Lord from the receipt of custom, and remained with him to be a witness of his ascension; if St. John's Gospel was written by the beloved disciple who lay on Jesus' breast at supper; if the other two were

[1] I do not speak of individuals; I speak of *tendency*.

indeed the composition of the companions of St. Peter and St. Paul; if in these four Gospels we have independent accounts of our Lord's life and passion, mutually confirming each other, and if it can be proved that they existed and were received as authentic in the first century of the Christian Church, a stronger man than M. Renan will fail to shake the hold of Christianity in England.

We put the question hypothetically, not as meaning to suggest the fact as uncertain, but being—as the matter is of infinite moment—being, as it were, the hinge on which our faith depends, we are forced beyond our office to trespass on ground which we leave usually to professional theologians, and to tell them plainly that there are difficulties which it is their business to clear up, but to which, with worse than imprudence, they close their own eyes, and deliberately endeavour to keep them from ours. Some of these it is the object of this paper to point out, with an earnest hope that Dean Alford, or Dr. Ellicott, or some other competent clergyman, may earn our gratitude by telling us what to think about them. Setting aside their duty to us, they will find frank dealing in the long run their wisest policy. The conservative theologians of England have carried silence to the point of indiscretion.

Looking, then, to the three first Gospels, usually called the Synoptical, we are encountered immediately with a remarkable common element which runs through them all—a resemblance too peculiar to be the result of accident, and impossible to reconcile with the theory that the writers were independent of each other. It is not that general similarity which we should expect in different accounts of the same scenes and events, but, amidst many differences, a broad vein of circumstantial identity extending both to substance and expression.

And the identity is of several kinds.

I. Although the three evangelists relate each of

them some things peculiar to themselves, and although between them there are some striking divergencies—as, for instance, between the account of our Lord's miraculous birth in St. Matthew and St. Luke, and in the absence in St. Mark of any mention of the miraculous birth at all—nevertheless, the body of the story is essentially the same. Out of those words and actions—so many, that if all were related the world itself could not contain the books that should be written—the three evangelists select for the most part the same; the same parables, the same miracles, and, more or less complete, the same addresses. When the material from which to select was so abundant—how abundant we have but to turn to the fourth evangelist to see—it is at least singular that three writers should have made so nearly the same choice.

II. But this is not all. Not only are the things related the same, but the language in which they are expressed is the same. Sometimes the resemblance is such as would have arisen had the evangelists been translating from a common document in another language. Sometimes, and most frequently, there is an absolute verbal identity; sentences, paragraphs, long passages, are word for word the very same; a few expressions have been slightly varied, a particle transposed, a tense or a case altered, but the differences being no greater than would arise if a number of persons were to write from memory some common passages which they knew almost by heart. That there should have been this identity in the account of the *words* used by our Lord seems at first sight no more than we should expect. But it extends to the narrative as well; and with respect to the parables and discourses, there is this extraordinary feature, that whereas our Lord is supposed to have spoken in the ordinary language of Palestine, the resemblance between the evangelists is in the Greek translation of them; and how unlikely

it is that a number of persons in translating from one language into another should hit by accident on the same expressions, the simplest experiment will show.

Now, waiving for a moment the inspiration of the Gospels; interpreting the Bible, to use Mr. Jowett's canon, as any other book, what are we to conclude from phenomena of this kind? What in fact do we conclude when we encounter them elsewhere? In the lives of the saints, in the monkish histories, there are many parallel cases. A mediæval chronicler, when he found a story well told by his predecessor, seldom cared to recompose it; he transcribed the words as they stood into his own narrative, contented perhaps with making a few trifling changes to add a finish or a polish. Sometimes two chroniclers borrow from a third. There is the same identity in particular expressions, the same general resemblance, the same divergence, as each improves his original from his independent knowledge by addition or omission; but the process is so transparent, that when the original is lost, the existence of it can be inferred with certainty.

Or to take a more modern parallel—we must entreat our readers to pardon any seeming irreverence which may appear in the comparison—if in the letters of the correspondents of three different newspapers written from America or Germany, we were to read the same incidents told in the same language, surrounded it might be with much that was unlike, but nevertheless in themselves identical, and related in words which, down to unusual and remarkable terms of expression, were exactly the same, what should we infer?

Suppose, for instance, the description of a battle; if we were to find but a single paragraph in which two out of three correspondents agreed verbally, we should regard it as a very strange coincidence. If all three agreed verbally, we should feel certain it was more than accident. If throughout their letters there was a

recurring series of such passages, no doubt would be left in the mind of any one that either the three correspondents had seen each other's letters, or that each had had before him some common narrative which he had incorporated in his own account. It might be doubtful which of these two explanations was the true one; but that one or other of them was true, unless we suppose a miracle, is as certain as any conclusion in human things can be certain at all. The sworn testimony of eye-witnesses who had seen the letters so composed would add nothing to the weight of a proof which without their evidence would be overwhelming; and were the writers themselves, with their closest friends and companions, to swear that there had been no intercommunication, and no story pre-existing of which they had made use, and that each had written *bonâ fide* from his own original observation, an English jury would sooner believe the whole party perjured than persuade themselves that so extraordinary a coincidence would have occurred.

Nor would it be difficult to ascertain from internal evidence which of the two possible interpretations was the real one. If the writers were men of evident good faith; if their stories were in parts widely different; if they made no allusion to each other, nor ever referred to one another as authorities; finally, if neither of them, in giving a different account of any matter from that given by his companions, professed either to be supplying an omission or correcting a mistake, then we should have little doubt that they had themselves not communicated with each other, but were supplementing, each of them from other sources of information, a central narrative which all alike had before them.

How far may we apply the parallel to the Synoptical Gospels? In one sense the inspiration lifts them above comparison, and disposes summarily of critical perplexities; there is no difficulty which may not be explained by a miracle; and in that aspect the points

of disagreement between these accounts are more surprising than the similarities. It is on the disagreements in fact that the labours of commentators have chiefly been expended. Yet it is a question whether, on the whole, inspiration does not leave unaffected the ordinary human phenomena; and it is hard to suppose that where the rules of judgment in ordinary writings are so distinct, God would have thus purposely cast a stumbling-block in our way, and contrived a snare into which our reason should mislead us. That is hard to credit; yet that and nothing else we must believe if we refuse to apply to the Gospel the same canons of criticism which with other writings would be a guide so decisive. It may be assumed that the facts connected with them admit a natural explanation; and we arrive, therefore, at the same conclusion as before: that either two of the evangelists borrowed from the third, or else that there was some other Gospel besides those which are now extant; existing perhaps both in Hebrew and Greek—existing certainly in Greek—the fragments of which are scattered up and down through St. Mark, St. Matthew, and St. Luke, in masses sufficiently large to be distinctly recognisable.

That at an early period in the Christian Church many such Gospels existed, we know certainly from the words of St. Luke. St. Paul alludes to words used by our Lord which are not mentioned by the evangelists, which he assumed nevertheless to be well known to his hearers. He speaks, too, of an appearance of our Lord after his resurrection to five hundred brethren; on which the four Gospels are also silent. It is indisputable, therefore, that besides and antecedent to them there were other accounts of our Lord's life in use in the Christian Church. And indeed, what more natural, what more necessary, than that from the day on which the apostles entered upon their public mission, some narrative should have been drawn up of the facts which they were

about to make known? Then as little as now could the imagination of men be trusted to relate accurately a story composed of stupendous miracles without mistake or exaggeration; and their very first step would have been to compose an account of what had passed, to which they could speak with certainty, and which they could invest with authoritative sanction. Is it not possible then that the identical passages in the Synoptical Gospels are the remains of something of this kind, which the evangelists, in their later, fuller, and more complete histories, enlarged and expanded? The conjecture has been often made, and English commentators have for the most part dismissed it slightingly; not apparently being aware that in rejecting one hypothesis they were bound to suggest another; or at least to admit that there was something which required explanation, though this particular suggestion did not seem satisfactory. Yet if it were so, the external testimony for the truth of the Gospel history would be stronger than before. It would amount to the collective view of the first congregation of Christians, who had all immediate and personal knowledge of our Lord's miracles and death and resurrection.

But perhaps the external history of the four Gospels may throw some light upon the question, if indeed we can speak of light where all is a cloud of uncertainty. It would seem as if the sources of Christianity, like the roots of all other living things, were purposely buried in mystery. There exist no ancient writings whatever of such vast moment to mankind of which so little can be authentically known.

The four Gospels, in the form and under the names which they at present bear, become visible only with distinctness towards the end of the second century of the Christian era. Then it was that they assumed the authoritative position which they have ever since maintained, and were selected by the Church out of

the many other then existing narratives as the supreme and exclusive authorities for our Lord's life. Irenæus is the first of the Fathers in whom they are found attributed by name to St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. That there were four true evangelists, and that there could be neither more nor less than four, Irenæus had persuaded himself because there were four winds or spirits, and four divisions of the earth, for which the Church being universal required four columns; because the cherubim had four faces, to each of which an evangelist corresponded; because four covenants had been given to mankind—one before the Deluge in Adam, one after the Deluge in Noah, the third in Moses, the fourth and greatest in the New Testament; while again the name of Adam was composed of four letters. It is not to be supposed that the intellects of those great men who converted the world to Christianity were satisfied with arguments so imaginative as these; they must have had other closer and more accurate grounds for their decision; but the mere employment of such figures as evidence in any sense, shows the enormous difference between their modes of reasoning and ours, and illustrates the difficulty of deciding at our present distance from them how far their conclusions were satisfactory.

Of the Gospels separately the history is immediately lost in legend.

The first notice of a Gospel of St. Matthew is in the well-known words of Papias, a writer who in early life might have seen St. John. The works of Papias are lost—a misfortune the more to be regretted because Eusebius speaks of him as a man of very limited understanding, *παν̀υ σμικρὸς τὸν νοῦν*. Understanding and folly are words of undetermined meaning; and when language like that of Irenæus could seem profound, it is quite possible that Papias might have possessed commonplace faculties which would have been supremely

useful to us. A surviving fragment of him says that St. Matthew put together the discourses of our Lord in Hebrew, and that every one interpreted them as he could. Pantænus, said by Eusebius to have been another contemporary of the apostles, was reported to have gone to India, to have found there a congregation of Christians which had been established by St. Bartholomew, and to have seen in use among them this Hebrew Gospel. Origen repeats the story, which in his time had become the universal Catholic tradition, that St. Matthew's was the first Gospel, that it was written in Hebrew, and that it was intended for the use of the Jewish converts. Jerome adds that it was unknown when or by whom it was rendered into a Greek version. That was all which the Church had to say; and what had become of that Hebrew original no one could tell.

That there existed *a* Hebrew Gospel in very early times is well authenticated; there was a Gospel called the Gospel of the Ebionites or Nazarenes, of which Origen possessed a copy, and which St. Jerome thought it worth while to translate; this too is lost, and Jerome's translation of it also; but the negative evidence seems conclusive that it was not the lost Gospel of St. Matthew. Had it been so it could not have failed to be recognised, although from such accounts of it as have been preserved it possessed some affinity with St. Matthew's Gospel. In one instance indeed it gave the right reading of a text which has perplexed orthodox commentators, and has induced others to suspect that that Gospel in its present form could not have existed before the destruction of Jerusalem. The Zachariah the son of Barachiah said by St. Matthew to have been slain between the temple and the altar, is unknown to Old Testament history, while during the siege of Jerusalem a Zachariah the son of Barachiah actually was killed exactly in the manner described. But in the Ebionite Gospel the same words are found with this slight but important

difference, that the Zachariah in question is there called the son of Jehoiadah, and is at once identified with the person whose murder is related in the Second Book of Chronicles. The later translator of St. Matthew had probably confused the names.

Of St. Mark's Gospel the history is even more profoundly obscure. Papias, again the highest discoverable link of the Church tradition, says that St. Mark accompanied St. Peter to Rome as his interpreter; and that while there he wrote down what St. Peter told him, or what he could remember St. Peter to have said. Clement of Alexandria enlarges the story. According to Clement, when St. Peter was preaching at Rome the Christian congregation there requested St. Mark to write a Gospel for them; St. Mark complied without acquainting St. Peter, and St. Peter when informed of it was uncertain whether to give or withhold his sanction till his mind was set at rest by a vision.

Irenæus, on the other hand, says that St. Mark's Gospel was not written till after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul. St. Chrysostom says that after it was written St. Mark went to Egypt and published it at Alexandria; Epiphanius again, that the Egyptian expedition was undertaken at the express direction of St. Peter himself.

Thus the Church tradition is inconsistent with itself, and in all probability is nothing but a structure of air; it is bound up with the presence of St. Peter at Rome; and the only ground for supposing that St. Peter was ever at Rome at all is the passage at the close of St. Peter's First Epistle, where it pleased the Fathers to assume that the "Babylon" there spoken of must have been the city of the Cæsars. This passage alone, with the wild stories (now known to have originated in the misreading of an inscription) of St. Peter's conflict with Simon Magus in the presence of the emperor, form together the light and airy arches on which the huge

pretences of the Church of Rome have reared themselves. If the Babylon of the Epistle was Babylon on the Euphrates—and there is not the slightest historical reason to suppose it to have been anything else—the story of the origin of St. Mark's Gospel perishes with the legend to which it was inseparably attached by Church tradition.

Of St. John's Gospel we do not propose to speak in this place; it forms a subject by itself; and of that it is enough to say that the defects of external evidence which undoubtedly exist seem overborne by the overwhelming proofs of authenticity contained in the Gospel itself.

The faint traditionary traces which inform us that St. Matthew and St. Mark were supposed to have written Gospels fail us with St. Luke. The apostolic and the immediately post-apostolic Fathers never mention Luke as having written a history of our Lord at all. There was indeed a Gospel in use among the Marcionites which resembled that of St. Luke, as the Gospel of the Ebionites resembled that of St. Matthew. In both the one and the other there was no mention of our Lord's miraculous birth; and later writers accused Marcion of having mutilated St. Luke. But apparently their only reason for thinking so was that the two Gospels were like each other; and for all that can be historically proved, the Gospel of the Marcionites may have been the older of the two. What is wanting externally, however, is supposed to be more than made up by the language of St. Luke himself. The Gospel was evidently composed in its present form by the same person who wrote the Acts of the Apostles. In the latter part of the Acts of the Apostles the writer speaks in the first person as the companion of St. Paul; and the date of this Gospel seems to be thus conclusively fixed at an early period in the apostolic age. There is at least a high probability that this reasoning is sound;

yet it has seemed strange that a convert so eminent as "the most excellent" Theophilus, to whom St. Luke addressed himself, should be found impossible to identify. "Most excellent" was a title given only to persons of high rank; and it is singular that St. Paul himself should never have mentioned so considerable a name. And again there is something peculiar in the language of the introduction to the Gospel itself. Though St. Luke professes to be writing on the authority of eye-witnesses, he does not say he had spoken with eye-witnesses; so far from it, that the word translated in the English version "delivered" is literally "handed down;" it is the verb which corresponds to the technical expression for "tradition"; and the words translated "having had perfect understanding of all things from the first" might be rendered more properly "having traced or followed up all things from the beginning." And again, as it is humanly speaking certain that in St. Luke's Gospel there are passages, however they are to be explained, which were embodied in it from some other source; so, though extremely probable, it is not absolutely certain that those passages in the Acts in which the writer speaks in the first person are by the same hand as the body of the narrative. If St. Luke had anywhere directly introduced himself—if he had said plainly that he, the writer who was addressing Theophilus, had personally joined St. Paul, and in that part of his story was relating what he had seen and heard, there would be no room for uncertainty. But, so far as we know, there is no other instance in literature of a change of person introduced abruptly without explanation. The whole book is less a connected history than a series of episodes and fragments of the proceedings of the apostles; and it is to be noticed that the account of St. Paul's conversion, as given in its place in the first part of the narrative, differs in one material point from the second account given later in the part which was unquestionably the

work of one of St. Paul's companions. There is a possibility—it amounts to no more, and the suggestion is thrown out for the consideration of those who are better able than this writer to judge of it—that in the Gospel and the Acts we have the work of a careful editor of the second century. Towards the close of that century a prominent actor in the great movement which gave their present authority to the four Gospels was Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch; he it was who brought them together, incorporated into a single work—*in unum opus;* and it may be, after all, that in him we have the long-sought person to whom St. Luke was writing; that the Gospel which we now possess was compiled at his desire out of other imperfect Gospels in use in the different Churches; and that it formed a part of his scheme to supersede them by an account more exhaustive, complete, and satisfactory.

To this hypothesis indeed there is an answer which if valid at all is absolutely fatal. We are told that although the names of the writers of the Gospels may not be mentioned until a comparatively late period, yet that the Gospels themselves can be shown to have existed, because they are habitually quoted in the authentic writings of the earliest of the Fathers. If this be so, the slightness of the historical thread is of little moment, and we may rest safely on the solid ground of so conclusive a fact. But is it so? That the early Fathers quoted some accounts of our Lord's life is abundantly clear; but did they quote these? We proceed to examine this question—again tentatively only—we do but put forward certain considerations on which we ask for fuller information.

If any one of the primitive Christian writers was likely to have been acquainted with the authentic writings of the evangelists, that one was indisputably Justin Martyr. Born in Palestine in the year 89, Justin Martyr lived to the age of seventy-six; he travelled

over the Roman world as a missionary; and intellectually he was more than on a level with most educated Oriental Christians. He was the first distinctly controversial writer which the Church produced; and the great facts of the Gospel history were obviously as well known to him as they are to ourselves. There are no traces in his writings of an acquaintance with anything peculiar either to St. John or St. Mark; but there are extracts in abundance often identical with and generally nearly resembling passages in St. Matthew and St. Luke. Thus at first sight it would be difficult to doubt that with these two Gospels at least he was intimately familiar. And yet in all his citations there is this pecularity, that Justin Martyr never speaks of either of the evangelists by name; he quotes or seems to quote invariably from something which he calls ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν Ἀποστόλων, or "Memoirs of the Apostles." It is no usual habit of his to describe his authorities vaguely: when he quotes the Apocalypse he names St. John; when he refers to a prophet he specifies Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Daniel. Why, unless there was some particular reason for it, should he use so singular an expression whenever he alludes to the sacred history of the New Testament? why, if he knew the names of the evangelists, did he never mention them even by accident? Nor is this the only singularity in Justin Martyr's quotations. There are those slight differences between them and the text of the Gospels which appear between the Gospels themselves. When we compare an extract in Justin with the parallel passage in St. Matthew, we find often that it differs from St. Matthew just as St. Matthew differs from St. Luke, or both from St. Mark —great verbal similarity—many paragraphs agreeing word for word—and then other paragraphs where there is an alteration of expression, tense, order, or arrangement.

Again, just as in the midst of the general resemblance

between the Synoptical Gospels, each evangelist has something of his own which is not to be found in the others, so in these "Memoirs of the Apostles" there are facts unknown to either of the evangelists. In the account extracted by Justin from "the Memoirs," of the baptism in the Jordan, the words heard from heaven are not as St. Matthew gives them—"Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"—but the words of the psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee;" a reading which, singularly enough, was to be found in the Gospel of the Ebionites.

Another curious addition to the same scene is in the words καὶ πῦρ ἀνήφθη ἐν Ιορδάνῃ, "and a fire was kindled in Jordan."

Again, Justin Martyr speaks of our Lord having promised "to clothe us with garments made ready for us if we keep his commandments"—καὶ αἰώνιον βασιλείαν προνοῆσαι—whatever those words may precisely mean.

These and other peculiarities in Justin may be explained if we suppose him to have been quoting from memory. The evangelical text might not as yet have acquired its verbal sanctity; and as a native of Palestine he might well have been acquainted with other traditions which lay outside the written word. The silence as to names, however, remains unexplained; and as the facts actually stand there is the same kind of proof, and no more, that Justin Martyr was acquainted with St. Matthew and St. Luke as there is that one of these evangelists made extracts from the other, or both from St. Mark. So long as one set of commentators decline to recognise the truth of this relation between the Gospels, there will be others who with as much justice will dispute the relation of Justin to them. He too might have used another Gospel, which, though like them, was not identical with them.

After Justin Martyr's death, about the year 170,

appeared Tatian's *Diatessaron*, a work which, as its title implies, was a harmony of four Gospels, and most likely of *the* four; yet again not exactly as we have them. Tatian's harmony, like so many others of the early evangelical histories, was silent on the miraculous birth, and commenced only with the public ministration. The text was in other places different, so much so that Theodoret accuses Tatian of having mutilated the Gospels; but of this Theodoret had probably no better means of judging than we have. The *Diatessaron* has been long lost, and the name is the only clue to its composition.

Of far more importance than either Justin or Tatian are such writings as remain of the immediate successors of the apostles—Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Ignatius: it is asserted confidently that in these there are quotations from the Gospels so exact that they cannot be mistaken.

We will examine them one by one.

In an epistle of Barnabas there is one passage—it is the only one of the kind to be found in him—agreeing word for word with the Synoptical Gospels, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." It is one of the many passages in which the Greek of the three evangelists is exactly the same; it was to be found also in Justin's *Memoirs*; and there can be no doubt that Barnabas either knew those Gospels or else the common source—if common source there was—from which the evangelists borrowed. More than this such a quotation does not enable us to say; and till some satisfactory explanation has been offered of the agreement between the evangelists, the argument can advance no further. On the other hand, Barnabas like St. Paul had other sources from which he drew his knowledge of our Lord's words. He too ascribes words to Him which are not recorded by the evangelists. οὕτω φησὶν Ἰήσους· οἱ θέλοντές με ἰδεῖν καὶ ἅψασθαί μου τῆς βασιλείας ὀφείλουσι

θλίβεντες καὶ πάθοντες λαβεῖν με. The thought is everywhere in the Gospels, the words nowhere, nor anything like them.

Both Ignatius and Polycarp appear to quote the Gospels, yet with them also there is the same uncertainty; while Ignatius quotes as genuine an expression which, so far as we know, was peculiar to a translation of the Gospel of the Ebionites—"Handle me and see, for I am not a spirit without body," ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι δαιμόνιον ἀσώματον.

Clement's quotations are still more free, for Clement nowhere quotes the text of the evangelists exactly as it at present stands; often he approaches it extremely close; at times the agreement is rather in meaning than words, as if he were translating from another language. But again Clement more noticeably than either of the other apostolic Fathers cites expressions of our Lord of which the evangelists knew nothing.

For instance—

"The Lord saith, 'If ye be with me gathered into my bosom, and do not after my commandments, I will cast you off, and I will say unto you, Depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of inquity.'"

And again:—

"The Lord said, 'Ye shall be as sheep in the midst of wolves.' Peter answered and said unto him, 'Will the wolves then tear the sheep?' Jesus said unto Peter, 'The sheep need not fear the wolves after they (the sheep) be dead: and fear not ye those who kill you and can do nothing to you; but fear Him who after you be dead hath power over soul and body to cast them into hell-fire.'"

In these words we seem to have the lost link in a passage which appears in a different connection in St. Matthew and St. Luke. It may be said, as with Justin Martyr, that Clement was quoting from memory in the sense rather than in the letter; although even so

it is difficult to suppose that he could have invented an interlocution of St. Peter. Yet no hypothesis will explain the most strange words which follow:—

"The Lord being asked when His kingdom should come, said, 'When two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within, and the male with the female neither male nor female.'"

It is needless to say how remote are such expressions as these from any which have come down to us through the evangelists; but they were no inventions of Clement. The passage reappears later in Clement of Alexandria, who found it in something which he called the Gospel of the Egyptians.

It will be urged that because Clement quoted other authorities beside the evangelists, it does not follow that he did not know and quote from them. If the citation of a passage which appears in almost the same words in another book is not to be accepted as a proof of an acquaintance with that book, we make it impossible, it may be said, to prove from quotations at all the fact of any book's existence. But this is not the case. If a Father, in relating an event which is told variously in the Synoptical Gospels, had followed one of them minutely in its verbal peculiarities, it would go far to prove that he was acquainted with that one; if the same thing was observed in all his quotations, the proof would amount to demonstration. If he agreed minutely in one place with one Gospel, minutely in a second with another, minutely in a third with another, there would be reason to believe that he was acquainted with them all; but when he merely relates what they also relate in language which approaches theirs and yet differs from it, as they also resemble yet differ from one another, we do not escape from the circle of uncertainty, and we conclude either that the early Fathers made quotations with a looseness irreconcilable with the idea that the language of the Gospels

possessed any verbal sacredness to them, or that there were in their times other narratives of our Lord's life standing in the same relation to the three Gospels as St. Matthew stands to St. Mark and St. Luke.

Thus the problem returns upon us; and it might almost seem as if the explanation was laid purposely beyond our reach. We are driven back upon internal criticism; and we have to ask again what account is to be given of that element common to the Synoptical Gospels, common also to those other Gospels of which we find traces so distinct—those verbal resemblances, too close to be the effect of accident—those differences which forbid the supposition that the evangelists copied one another. So many are those common passages, that if all which is peculiar to each evangelist by himself were dropped, if those words and those actions only were retained which either all three or two at least share together, the figure of our Lord from His baptism to His ascension would remain with scarcely impaired majesty.

One hypothesis, and so far as we can see one only, would make the mystery intelligible, that immediately on the close of our Lord's life some original sketch of it was drawn up by the congregation, which gradually grew and gathered round it whatever his mother, his relations, or his disciples afterwards individually might contribute. This primary history would thus not be the work of any one mind or man; it would be the joint work of the Church, and thus might well be called *Memoirs of the Apostles;* and would naturally be quoted without the name of either one of them being specially attached to it. As Christianity spread over the world, and separate Churches were founded by particular apostles, copies would be multiplied, and copies of those copies; and, unchecked by the presence (before the invention of printing impossible) of any authoritative text, changes would creep in—passages would be left out which did not suit the peculiar views of this or that sect;

others would be added as this or that apostle recollected something which our Lord had said that bore on questions raised in the development of the creed. Two great divisions would form themselves between the Jewish and the Gentile Churches; there would be a Hebrew Gospel and a Greek Gospel, and the Hebrew would be translated into Greek, as Papias says St. Matthew's Gospel was. Eventually the confusion would become intolerable; and among the conflicting stories the Church would have been called on to make its formal choice.

This fact at least is certain from St. Luke's words, that at the time when he was writing many different narratives did actually exist. The hypothesis of a common origin for them has as yet found little favour with English theologians; yet rather perhaps because it would be inconvenient for certain peculiar forms of English thought than because it has not probability on its side. That the Synoptical Gospels should have been a natural growth rather than the special and independent work of three separate writers, would be unfavourable to a divinity which has built itself up upon particular texts, and has been more concerned with doctrinal polemics than with the broader basements of historic truth. Yet the text theory suffers equally from the mode in which the first Fathers treated the Gospels, if it were these Gospels indeed which they used. They at least could have attributed no importance to words and phrases; while again, as we said before, a narrative dating from the cradle of Christianity, with the testimony in its favour of such broad and deep reception, would, however wanting in some details, be an evidence of the truth of the main facts of the Gospel history very much stronger than that of three books composed we know not when, and the origin of which it is impossible to trace, which it is impossible to regard as independent, and the writers of which in any other view of

them must be assumed to have borrowed from each other.

But the object of this article is not to press either this or any other theory; it is but to ask from those who are able to give it an answer to the most serious of questions. The truth of the Gospel history is now more widely doubted in Europe than at any time since the conversion of Constantine. Every thinking person who has been brought up a Christian and desires to remain a Christian, yet who knows anything of what is passing in the world, is looking to be told on what evidence the New Testament claims to be received. The state of opinion proves of itself that the arguments hitherto offered produce no conviction. Every other miraculous history is discredited as legend, however exalted the authority on which it seems to be rested. We crave to have good reason shown us for maintaining still the one great exception. Hard worked in other professions, and snatching with difficulty sufficient leisure to learn how complicated is the problem, the laity can but turn to those for assistance who are set apart and maintained as their theological trustees. We can but hope and pray that some one may be found to give us an edition of the Gospels in which the difficulties will neither be slurred over with convenient neglect or noticed with affected indifference. It may or may not be a road to a bishopric; it may or may not win the favour of the religious world; but it will earn at least the respectful gratitude of those who cannot trifle with holy things, and who believe that true religion is the service of truth.

The last words were scarcely written when an advertisement appeared, the importance of which can scarcely be over-estimated. A commentary is announced on the Old and New Testaments, to be composed with a view to what are called the "misrepresentations" of modern criticism. It is to be brought out under the

direction of the heads of the Church, and is the nearest approach to an official act in these great matters which they have ventured for two hundred years. It is not for us to anticipate the result. The word "misrepresentations" is unfortunate; we should have augured better for the work if instead of it had been written "the sincere perplexities of honest minds." But the execution may be better than the promise. If these perplexities are encountered honourably and successfully, the Church may recover its supremacy over the intellect of the country; if otherwise, the archbishop who has taken the command will have steered the vessel direct upon the rocks.

HOMER

THEY fell before the Greeks, and in its turn the war of Troy is now falling before the critics. That ten years' death-struggle, in which the immortals did not disdain to mingle—those massive warriors, with their grandeur and their chivalry, have, "like an unsubstantial pageant, faded" before the wand of these modern enchanters; and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and the other early legends, are discovered to be no more than the transparent myths of an old cosmogony, the arabesques and frescoes with which the imagination of the Ionian poets set off and ornamented the palace of the heavens, the struggle of the earth with the seasons, and the labours of the sun through his twelve signs.

Nay, with Homer himself it was likely at one time to have fared no better. His works, indeed, were indestructible, yet, if they could not be destroyed, they might be disorganised, and with their instinctive hatred of facts, the critics fastened on the historical existence of the poet. The origin of the poems was distributed among the clouds of pre-historic imagination; and—instead of a single inspired Homer for their author, we were required to believe in some extraordinary spontaneous generation, or in some collective genius of an age which ignorance had personified.

But the person of a poet has been found more difficult of elimination than a mere fact of history. Facts, it was once said, were stubborn things; but in our days we have changed all that; a fact, under the knife of a critic, splits in pieces, and is dissected out of belief with incredible readiness. The helpless thing lies under his hand like a foolish witness in a law court, when brow-

beaten by an unscrupulous advocate, and is turned about and twisted this way and that way, till in its distraction it contradicts itself, and bears witness against itself; and to escape from torture, at last flies utterly away, itself half doubting its own existence.

But it requires more cunning weapons to destroy a Homer; like his own immortals, he may be wounded, but he cannot have the life carved out of him by the prosaic strokes of common men. His poems have but to be disintegrated to unite again, so strong are they in the individuality of their genius. The singleness of their structure—the unity of design—the distinctness of drawing in the characters—the inimitable peculiarities of manner in each of them, seem to place beyond serious question, after the worst onslaught of the Wolfian critics, that both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, whether or not the work of the same mind, are at least each of them singly the work of one.

Let them leave us Homer, however, and on the rank and file of facts they may do their worst; we can be indifferent to, or even thankful for, what slaughter they may make. In the legends of the Theogonia, in that of Zeus and Cronus, for instance, there is evidently a metaphysical allegory; in the legends of Persephone, or of the Dioscuri, a physical one; in that of Athene, a profoundly philosophical one; and fused as the entire system was in the intensely poetical conception of the early thinkers, it would be impossible, even if it were desirable, at this time of day, to disentangle the fibres of all these various elements. Fact and theory, the natural and the supernatural, the legendary and the philosophical, shade off so imperceptibly one into the other, in the stories of the Olympians, or of their first offspring, that we can never assure ourselves that we are on historic ground, or that, antecedent to the really historic age, there is any such ground to be found anywhere. The old notion, that the heroes were deified

men, is no longer tenable. With but few exceptions, we can trace their names as the names of the old gods of the Hellenic or Pelasgian races; and if they appeared later in human forms, they descended from Olympus to assume them. Diomed was the Œtolian sun-god; Achilles was worshipped in Thessaly long before he became the hero of the tale of Troy. The tragedy of the house of Atreus, and the bloody bath of Agamemnon, as we are now told with appearance of certainty,[1] are humanised stories of the physical struggle of the opposing principles of life and death, light and darkness, night and day, winter and summer.

And let them be so; we need not be sorry to believe that there is no substantial basis for these tales of crime. The history of mankind is not so pure but that we can afford to lose a few dark pages out of the record. Let it be granted that of the times which Homer sung historically we know nothing literal at all—not any names of any kings, of any ministers, wars, intrigues, revolutions, crimes. They are all gone—dead—passed away; their vacant chronicles may be silent as the tombs in which their bones are buried. Of such stuff as that with which historians fill their pages there is no trace; it is a blank, vacant as the annals of the Hottentot or of the Red Indian. Yet when all is said, there remain still to us in Homer's verse, materials richer, perhaps, than exist for any period of the ancient world, richer than even for the brilliant days of Pericles, or of the Cæsars, to construct a history of another kind—a history, a picture not of the times of which he sang, but of the men among whom he lived. How they acted; how they thought, talked, and felt; what they made of this earth, and of their place in it; their private life and their public life; men and women; masters and servants; rich and poor—we have it all delineated in the marvellous verse of a poet who, be he what he may,

[1] Mackay's *Progress of the Intellect.*

was in this respect the greatest which the earth has ever seen. In extent, the information is little enough; but in the same sense as it has been said that an hour at an Athenian supper-party would teach us more Grecian life and character than all Aristophanes, Homer's pictures of life and manners are so living, so distinct, so palpable, that a whole prose encyclopædia of disconnected facts could give us nothing like them. It is the marvellous property of verse—one, if we rightly consider it, which would excuse any superstition on the origin of language—that the metrical and rhythmic arrangement of syllable and sound is able to catch and express back to us, not the stories of actions, but the actions themselves, with all the feelings which inspire them; to call up human action, and all other outward things in which human hearts take interest—to produce them, or to reproduce them, with a distinctness which shall produce the same emotions which they would themselves produce when really existing. The thing itself is made present before us by an exercise of creative power as genuine as that of Nature herself; which, perhaps, is but the same power manifesting itself at one time in words, at another in outward phenomena. Whatever be the cause, the fact is so. Poetry has this life-giving power, and prose has it not; and thus the poet is the truest historian. Whatever is properly valuable in history the poet gives us—not events and names, but emotion, but action, but life. He is the heart of his age, and his verse expresses his age; and what matter is it by what name he describes his places or his persons? What matter is it what his own name was, while we have himself, and while we have the originals, from which he drew? The work and the life are all for which we need care, are all which can really interest us; the names are nothing. Though Phœacia was a dreamland, or a symbol of the Elysian fields, yet Homer drew his material, his island, his palaces, his harbour, his

gardens of perennial beauty, from those fair cities which lay along the shores of his own Ionia; and like his blind Demodocus, Homer doubtless himself sung those very hymns which now delight us so, in the halls of many a princely Alcinous.

The prose historian may give us facts and names; he may catalogue the successions, and tell us long stories of battles, and of factions, and of political intrigues; he may draw characters for us, of the sort which figure commonly in such features of human, affairs, men of the unheroic, unpoetic kind—the Cleons, the Sejanuses, the Tiberiuses, a Philip the Second or a Louis Quatorze, in whom the noble element died out into selfishness and vulgarity. But great men—and all MEN properly so called (whatever is genuine and natural in them)—lie beyond prose, and can only be really represented by the poet. This is the reason why such men as Alexander, or as Cæsar, or as Cromwell, so perplex us in histories, because they and their actions are beyond the scope of the art through which we have looked at them. We compare the man as the historian represents him, with the track of his path through the world. The work is the work of a giant; the man, stripped of the vulgar appendages with which the stunted imagination of his biographer may have set him off, is full of meannesses and littlenesses, and is scarcely greater than one of ourselves. Prose, that is, has attempted something to which it is not equal. It describes a figure which it calls Cæsar; but it is not Cæsar, it is a monster. For the same reason, prose fictions, novels, and the like, are worthless for more than a momentary purpose. The life which they are able to represent is not worth representing. There is no person so poor in his own eyes as not to gaze with pleasure into a looking-glass; and the prose age may value its own image in the novel. But the value of all such representations is ephemeral. It is with the poet's

art as with the sculptor's—sandstone will not carve like marble, its texture is too loose to retain a sharply moulded outline. The actions of men, if they are true, noble, and genuine, are strong enough to bear the form and bear the polish of verse; if loose or feeble, they crumble away into the softer undulations of prose.

What the life was whose texture bore shaping into Homer's verse, we intend to spend these pages in examining. It is, of course, properly to be sought for in the poems themselves. But we shall here be concerned mainly with features which in the original are rather secondary than prominent, and which have to be collected out of fragments, here a line, and there a line, out of little hints let fall by Homer as it were by accident. Things too familiar to his own hearers to require dwelling on, to us, whose object is to make out just those very things which were familiar, are of special and singular value. It is not an inquiry which will much profit us, if we come to it with any grand notions of the "progress of the species," for in many ways it will discourage the belief in progress.

We have fallen into ways of talking of the childhood and infancy of the race, as if no beards had grown on any face before the modern Reformation; and even people who know what old Athens was under Pericles, look commonly on earlier Greece as scarcely struggling out of its cradle. It would have fared so with all early history except for the Bible. The Old Testament has operated partially to keep us in our modest senses, and we can see something grand about the patriarchs; but this is owing to exceptional causes, which do not apply to other literature; and in spite of our admiration of Homer's poetry, we regard his age, and the contemporary periods in the other people of the earth, as a kind of childhood little better than barbarism. We look upon it, at all events, as too far removed in every essential of spirit or of form from our own, to enable

us to feel for it any strong interest or sympathy. More or less we have, every one of us, felt something of this kind. Homer's men are, at first sight, unlike any men that we have ever seen; and it is not without a shock of surprise that, for the first time, we fall, in reading him, across some little trait of humanity which in form as well as spirit is really identical with our own experience. Then, for the moment, all is changed with us—gleams of light flash out, in which the drapery becomes transparent, and we see the human form behind it, and that entire old world in the warm glow of flesh and blood. Such is the effect of those few child scenes of his, which throw us back into our old familiar childhood. With all these years between us, there is no difference between their children and ours, and child would meet child without sense of strangeness in common games and common pleasures.

The little Ulysses, climbing on the knees of his father's guest, coaxing for a taste of the red wine, and spilling it as he starts at the unusual taste; or that other most beautiful picture of him running at Laertes's side in the garden at Ithaca, the father teaching the boy the names of the fruit-trees, and making presents to him of this tree and of that tree for his very own, to help him to remember what they were called; the partition wall of three thousand years melts away as we look back at scenes like these; that broad, world-experienced man was once, then, such a little creature as we remember ourselves, and Laertes a calm, kind father of the nineteenth century. Then, as now, the children loved to sport upon the shore, and watch the inrolling waves;—then, as now, the boy-architect would pile the moist sand into mimic town or castle, and when the work was finished, sweep it away again in wanton humour with foot and hand;—then, as now, the little tired maiden would cling to her mother's skirt, and trotting painfully along beside her, look up wistfully

and plead with moist eyes to be carried in her arms. Nay, and among the grown ones, where time has not changed the occupation, and the forms of culture have little room to vary, we meet again with very familiar faces. There is Melantho, the not over-modest tittering waiting-maid—saucy to her mistress and the old housekeeper, and always running after the handsome young princes. Unhappy Melantho, true child of universal nature! grievous work we should make with most households, if all who resemble thee were treated to as rough a destiny. And there are other old friends whom it is pleasant enough to recognise at so long a distance. "Certain smooth-haired, sleek-faced fellows—insolent where their lords would permit them; inquisitive and pert, living but to eat and drink, and pilfering the good things, to convey them stealthily to their friends outside the castle wall." The thing that hath been, that shall be again. When Homer wrote, the type had settled into its long-enduring form. "Such are they," he adds, in his good-natured irony, "as the valet race ever love to be."

With such evidence of identity among us all, it is worth while to look closer at the old Greeks, to try to find in Homer something beyond fine poetry, or exciting adventures or battle-scenes, or material for scholarship; for awhile to set all that aside, and look in him for the story of real living men—set to pilgrimise in the old way on the same old earth—men such as we are, children of one family, with the same work to do, to live the best life they could, and to save their souls—with the same trials, the same passions, the same difficulties, if with weaker means of meeting them.

And first for their religion.

Let those who like it, lend their labour to the unravelling the secrets of the mythologies. Theogonies and Theologies are not religion; they are but its historic dress and outward or formal expression, which,

like a language, may be intelligible to those who see the inward meaning in the sign, but no more than confused sound to us who live in another atmosphere, and have no means of transferring ourselves into the sentiment of an earlier era. It is not in these forms of a day or of an age that we should look for the real belief —the real feelings of the heart; but in the natural expressions which burst out spontaneously—expressions of opinion on Providence, on the relation of man to God, on the eternal laws by which this world is governed. Perhaps we misuse the word in speaking of religion; we ought rather to speak of piety: piety is always simple; the emotion is too vast, too overpowering, whenever it is genuine, to be nice or fantastic in its form; and leaving philosophies and cosmogonies to shape themselves in myth and legend, it speaks itself out with a calm and humble clearness. We may trifle with our own discoveries, and hand them over to the fancy or the imagination for elaborate decoration. We may shroud over supposed mysteries under an enigmatic veil, and adapt the degrees of initiation to the capacities of our pupils; but before the vast facts of God and Providence, the difference between man and man dwarfs into nothing. They are no discoveries of our own with which we can meddle, but revelations of the Infinite, which, like the sunlight, shed themselves on all alike, wise and unwise, good and evil, and they claim and they permit no other acknowledgment from us than the simple obedience of our lives, and the plainest confession of our lips.

Such confessions, except in David's Psalms, we shall not anywhere find more natural or unaffected than in Homer—most definite, yet never elaborate—as far as may be from any complimenting of Providence, yet expressing the most unquestioning conviction. We shall not often remember them when we set about religion as a business; but when the occasions of life

stir the feelings in us on which religion itself reposes, if we were as familiar with the *Iliad* as with the Psalms, the words of the old Ionian singer would leap as naturally to our lips as those of the Israelite king.

Zeus is not always the questionable son of Cronus, nor the gods always the mythologic Olympians. Generally, it is true, they appear as a larger order of subject beings—beings like men, and subject to a higher control—in a position closely resembling that of Milton's angels, and liable like them to passion and to error. But at times, the father of gods and men is the Infinite and Eternal Ruler—the living Providence of the world—and the lesser gods are the immortal administrators of his Divine will throughout the lower creation. For ever at the head of the universe there is an awful spiritual power; when Zeus appears with a distinct and positive personality, he is himself subordinate to an authority which elsewhere is one with himself. Wherever either he or the other gods are made susceptible of emotion, the Invisible is beyond and above them. When Zeus is the personal father of Sarpedon, and his private love conflicts with the law of the eternal order, though he has power to set aside the law, he dares not break it; but in the midst of his immortality, and on his own awful throne, he weeps tears of blood in ineffectual sorrow for his dying child. And again, there is a power supreme both over Zeus and over Poseidon, of which Iris reminds the latter, when she is sent to rebuke him for his disobedience to his brother. It is a law, she says, that the younger shall obey the elder, and the Erinnys will revenge its breach even on a god.

But descending from the more difficult Pantheon among mankind, the Divine law of justice is conceived as clearly as we in this day can conceive it. The supreme power is the same immortal lover of justice and the same hater of iniquity; and justice means what we mean by justice, and iniquity what we mean by

iniquity. There is no diffidence, no scepticism on this matter; the moral law is as sure as day and night, summer and winter. Thus in the sixteenth *Iliad*—

"When in the market-place men deal unjustly, and the rulers decree crooked judgment, not regarding the fear of God," God sends the storm, and the earthquake, and the tempests, as the executors of his vengeance.

Again, Ulysses says—

"God looks upon the children of men, and punishes the wrong doer."

And Eumæus—

"The gods love not violence and wrong; but the man whose ways are righteous, him they honour."

Even when as mere Olympians they put off their celestial nature, and mix in earthly strife, and are thus laid open to earthly suffering, a mystery still hangs about them; Diomed, even while he crosses the path of Ares, feels all the while "that they are short-lived who contend with the Immortals." Ajax boasts that he will save himself in spite of heaven, and immediately the wave dashes him upon the rocks. One light word escaped Ulysses in the excitement of his escape from the Cyclops, which nine years of suffering hardly expiated.

The same spirit which teaches Christians that those who have no earthly friend have specially a friend above to care for and to avenge them, taught the Ionians a proverb which appears again and again in Homer, that the stranger and the poor man are the patrimony of God; and it taught them, also, that sometimes men entertained the immortals unawares. It was a faith, too, which was more than words with them; for we hear of no vagrant acts or alien acts, and it was sacrilege to turn away from the gate whoever asked its hospitality. Times are changed. The world was not so crowded as it is now, and perhaps rogues were less abundant; but at any rate those antique Greeks did

what they said. We say what they said, while in the same breath we say, too, that it is impossible to do it.

In every way, the dependence of man on a special heavenly Providence was a matter of sure and certain conviction with them. Telemachus appeals to the belief in the Council at Ithaca. He questions it at Pylos, and is at once rebuked by Athene. Both in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to live justly is the steady service which the gods require, and their favour as surely follows when that service is paid, as a Nemesis sooner or later follows surely, too, on the evil-doers.

But without multiplying evidence, as we easily might, from every part of both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the sceptical and the believing forms of thought and feeling on this very subject are made points of dramatic contrast, to show off the opposition of two separate characters; and this is clear proof that such thoughts and feelings must have been familiar to Homer's hearers: if it were not so, his characters would have been without interest to his age—they would have been individual, and not universal; and no expenditure of intellect, or passion, would have made men care to listen to him. The two persons who throughout the *Iliad* stand out in relief in contrast to each other are, of course, Hector and Achilles; and faith in God (as distinct from a mere recognition of him) is as directly the characteristic of Hector as in Achilles it is entirely absent. Both characters are heroic, but the heroism in them springs from opposite sources. Both are heroic, because both are strong; but the strength of one is in himself, and the strength of the other is in his faith. Hector is a patriot; Achilles does not know what patriotism means; —Hector is full of tenderness and human affection; Achilles is self-enveloped. Even his love for Patroclus is not pure, for Patroclus is as the moon to the sun of Achilles, and Achilles sees his own glory reflected on his friend. They have both a forecast of their fate;

but Hector, in his great brave way, scoffs at omens; he knows that there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow, and defies augury. To do his duty is the only omen for which Hector cares; and if death must be, he can welcome it like a gallant man, if it find him fighting for his country. Achilles is moody, speculative, and subjective; he is too proud to attempt an ineffectual resistance to what he knows to be inevitable, but he alternately murmurs at it and scorns it. Till his passion is stirred by his friend's death, he seems equally to disdain the greatness of life and the littleness of it; the glories of a hero are not worth dying for; and like Solomon, and almost in Solomon's words, he complains that there is one event to all—

Ἓν δὲ ἴῃ τιμῇ ἣ μὲν κακὸς ἠὲ καὶ ἐσθλός.

To gratify his own spleen, he will accept an inglorious age in Thessaly, in exchange for a hero's immortality; as again in the end it is but to gratify his own wounded pride that he goes out to brave a fate which he scorns while he knows that it will subdue him. Thus, Achilles is the hero of the stern human, self-sufficing spirit, which does not deny or question destiny, but seeing nothing in it except a cold, iron law, meets force with force, and holds up against it an unbroken, unbending will. Human nature is at its best but a miserable business to him; death and sorrow are its inevitable lot. As a brave man, he will not fear such things, but he will not pretend to regard them as anything but detestable; and he comforts the old, weeping king of Troy, whose age he was himself bringing down to the grave in sorrow, with philosophic meditations on the vanity of all things, and a picture of Zeus mixing the elements of life out of the two urns of good and evil.

Turn to Hector, and we pass from shadow into sunlight. Achilles is all self. Hector all self-forgetfulness; Achilles all pride, Hector all modesty. The confidence

of Achilles is in himself and in his own arm; Hector knows (and the strongest expressions of the kind in all the *Iliad* are placed pointedly in Hector's mouth) that there is no strength except from above. "God's will," he says, "is over all; he makes the strong man to fear and gives the victory to the weak, if it shall please him." And at last, when he meets Achilles, he answers his bitter words, not with a defiance, but calmly saying, "I know that thou art mighty, and that my strength is far less than thine; but these things lie in the will of the gods, and I, though weaker far than thou, may yet take thy life from thee, if the Immortals choose to have it so."

So far, then, on the general fact of Divine Providence the feeling of Homer, and therefore of his countrymen, is distinct. Both the great poems bearing his name speak in the same language. But beyond the general fact, many questions rise in the application of the creed, and on one of these (it is among several remarkable differences which seem to make the *Odyssey* as of a later age) there is a very singular discrepancy. In the *Iliad*, the life of a man on this side the grave is enough for the completion of his destiny—for his reward, if he lives nobly; for his punishment, if he be base or wicked. Without repinings or scepticisms at the apparent successes of bad men, the poet is contented with what he finds, accepting cheerfully the facts of life as they are; it never seems to occur to him as seriously possible that a bad man could succeed or a good one fail; and as the ways of Providence, therefore, require no vindicating, neither his imagination nor his curiosity tempts him into penetrating the future. The house of Hades is the long home to which men go when dismissed out of their bodies; but it is a dim, shadowy place, of which we see nothing, and concerning which no conjectures are ventured. Achilles, in his passion over Patroclus, cries out, that although the dead forget the dead in the halls

of the departed, yet that he will remember his friend; and through the *Iliad* there is nothing clearer than these vague words to show with what hopes or fears the poet looked forward to death. So far, therefore, his faith may seem imperfect; yet, perhaps, not the less noble because imperfect; religious men in general are too well contented with the promise of a future life, as of a scene where the seeming shortcomings of the Divine administration will be carried out with larger equity. But whether imperfect or not, or whatever be the account of the omission, the theory of Hades in the Odyssey is developed into far greater distinctness; the future is still, indeed, shadowy, but it is no longer uncertain; there is the dreadful prison-house, with the judge upon his throne—and the darker criminals are overtaken by the vengeance which was delayed in life. The thin phantoms of the great ones of the past flit to and fro, mourning wearily for their lost mortality, and feeding on its memory. And more than this, as if it were beginning to be felt that something more was wanted after all to satisfy us with the completeness of the Divine rule, we have a glimpse—it is but one, but it is like a ray of sunshine falling in upon the darkness of the grave—"of the far-off Elysian fields where dwells Rhadamanthus with the golden hair, where life is ever sweet, and sorrow is not, nor winter, nor any rain or storm, and the never-dying zephyrs blow soft and cool from off the ocean."

However vague the filling up of such a picture, the outline is correct to the best which has been revealed even in Christianity, and it speaks nobly for the people among whom, even in germ, such ideas could root themselves. But think what we will of their notions of the future, the old Greek faith, considered as a practical and not a theological system, is truly admirable, clear, rational, and moral; if it does not profess to deal with the mysteries of evil in the heart, it is prompt

and stern with them in their darker outward manifestations, and, as far as it goes, as a guide in the common daily business of life, it scarcely leaves anything unsaid.

How far it went we shall see in the details of the life itself, the most important of which in the eyes of a modern will be the social organisation; and when he looks for organisation, he will be at once at a loss, for he will find the fact of government yet without defined form;—he will find law, but without a public sword to enforce it; and a "social machine" moving without friction under the easy control of opinion. There are no wars of classes, no politics, no opposition of interests, a sacred feeling of the will of the gods keeping every one in his proper subordination. It was a sacred duty that the younger should obey the elder, that the servant should obey his master, that property should be respected; in war, that the leader should be obeyed without questioning; in peace, that public questions should be brought before the assembly of the people, and settled quietly as the Council determined. In this assembly the prince presided, and beyond this presidency his authority at home does not seem to have extended. Of course there was no millennium in Ionia, and men's passions were pretty much what they are now. Without any organised means of repressing crime when it did appear, the people were exposed to, and often suffered under, extreme forms of violence—violence such as that of the suitors at Ithaca, or of Ægisthus at Argos. On the other hand, what a state of cultivation it implies, what peace and comfort in all classes, when society could hold together for a day with no more complete defence! And, moreover, there are disadvantages in elaborate police systems. Self-reliance is one of the highest virtues in which this world is intended to discipline us; and to depend upon ourselves even for our own personal safety is a large element in moral training.

But not to dwell on this, and to pass to the way in which the men of those days employed themselves.

Our first boy's feeling with the *Iliad* is, that Homer is pre-eminently a poet of war; that battles were his own passion, and tales of battles the delight of his listeners. His heroes appear like a great fighting aristocracy, such as the after Spartans were, Homer himself like another Tyrtæus, and the poorer occupations of life too menial for their notice or for his. They seem to live for glory—the one glory worth caring for only to be won upon the battle-field, and their exploits the one worthy theme of the poet's song. This is our boyish impression, and, like others such, it is very different from the truth. If war had been a passion with the Ionians, as it was with the Teutons and the Norsemen, the god of battles would have been supreme in the Pantheon; and Zeus would scarcely have called Ares the most hateful spirit in Olympus—most hateful, *because* of his delight in war and carnage. Mr. Carlyle looks forward to a chivalry of labour. He rather wishes than expects that a time may come when the campaign of industry against anarchic nature may gather into it those feelings of gallantry and nobleness which have found their vent hitherto in fighting only. The modern man's work, Mr. Carlyle says, is no longer to splinter lances or break down walls, but to break soil, to build barns and factories, and to find a high employment for himself in what hitherto has been despised as degrading. How to elevate labour—how to make it beautiful—how to enlist the *spirit* in it (for in no other way can it be made humanly profitable), that is the problem which he looks wistfully to the future to solve for us. He may look to the past as well as to the future; in the old Ionia he will find all for which he wishes. The wise Ulysses built his own house, and carved his own bed. Princes killed and cooked their own food. It was a holy work with them—their way of saying grace for it;

for they offered the animal in his death to the gods, and they were not butchers, but sacrificing priests. Even a keeper of swine is called noble, and fights like a hero; and the young Princess of Phœacia—the loveliest and gracefullest of Homer's women—drove the clothes-cart and washed linen with her own beautiful hands. Not only was labour free—for so it was among the early Romans; or honourable, so it was among the Israelites, —but it was beautiful—beautiful in the artist's sense, as perhaps elsewhere it has never been. In later Greece —in what we call the glorious period—toil had gathered about it its modern crust of supposed baseness—it was left to slaves; and wise men, in their philosophic lecture-rooms, spoke of it as unworthy of the higher specimens of cultivated humanity.

But Homer finds, in its most homely forms, fit illustrations for the most glorious achievements of his heroes; and in every page we find, in simile or metaphor, some common scene of daily life worked out with elaborate beauty. What the popular poet chooses for his illustrations are as good a measure as we can have of the popular feeling, and the images which he suggests are, of course, what he knows his hearers will be pleased to dwell upon. There is much to be said about this, and we shall return to it presently; in the meantime, we must not build on indirect evidence. The designs on the shield of Achilles are, together, a complete picture of Homer's microcosm, Homer surely never thought inglorious or ignoble what the immortal art of Hephaistos condescended to imitate.

The first groups of figures point a contrast which is obviously intentional; and the significance becomes sadly earnest when we remember who it was that was to bear the shield. The moral is a very modern one, and the picture might be called by the modern name of Peace and War. There are two cities, embodying in their condition the two ideas. In one, a happy wedding is going forward; the pomp of the hymeneal pro-

cession is passing along the streets; the air is full of music, and the women are standing at their doors to gaze. The other is in the terrors of a siege; the hostile armies glitter under the walls, the woman and children press into the defence, and crowd to the battlements. In the first city, a quarrel rises, and wrong is made right, not by violence and fresh wrong, but by the majesty of law and order. The heads of the families are sitting gravely in the market-place, the cause is heard, the compensation set, the claim awarded. Under the walls of the other city an ambush lies, like a wild beast on the watch for its prey. The unsuspecting herdsmen pass on with their flocks to the waterside; the spoilers spring from their hiding-place, and all is strife, and death, and horror, and confusion. If there were other war-scenes on the shield, it might be doubted whether Homer intended so strong a contrast as he executed; but fighting for its own sake was evidently held in slight respect with him. The forms of life which he thought really beautiful follow in a series of exquisite Rubens-like pictures: harvest scenes and village festivals, the ploughing and the vintage, or the lion-hunt on the reedy margin of the river; and he describes them with a serene, sunny enjoyment which no other old world art or poetry gives us anything in the least resembling. Even we ourselves, in our own pastorals, are struggling with but half success, after what Homer entirely possessed. What a majesty he has thrown into his harvest scene! The yellow corn falling, the boys following to gather up the large armsfull as they drop behind the reapers; in the distance a banquet preparing under the trees; in the centre, in the midst of his workmen, the king sitting in mellow silence, sceptre in hand, looking on with gladdened heart. Again we see the ploughmen, unlike what are to be seen in our corn-grounds, turning their teams at the end of the furrow, and attendants standing ready with the wine-cup, to

hand to them as they pass. Homer had seen these things, or he would not have sung of them; and princes and nobles might have shared such labour without shame, when kings presided over it, and gods designed it, and the divine Achilles bore its image among his insignia in the field.

Analogous to this, and as part of the same feeling, is that intense enjoyment of natural scenery, so keen in Homer, and of which the Athenian poets show not a trace; as, for instance, in that night landscape by the sea, finished off in a few lines only, but so exquisitely perfect! The broad moon, gleaming through the mist as it parts suddenly from off the sky; the crags and headlands, and soft wooded slopes, shining out in the silver light, and earth and sea transformed into fairy land.

We spoke of Homer's similes as illustrative of the Ionic feelings about war. War, of course, was glorious to him—but war in a glorious cause. Wars there were—wars in plenty, as there have been since, and as it is like there will be for some time to come; and a just war, of all human employments, is the one which most calls out whatever nobleness there is in man. It was the thing itself, the actual fighting and killing, as apart from the heroism for which it makes opportunities, for which we said that he showed no taste. His manner shows that he felt like a cultivated man, and not like a savage. His spirit stirs in him as he goes out with his hero to the battle; but there is no drunken delight in blood; we never hear of warriors as in that grim Hall of the Nibelungen, quenching their thirst in the red stream; never anything of that fierce exultation in carnage with which the war poetry of so many nations, late and old, is crimsoned. Everything, on the contrary, is contrived so as to soften the merely horrible, and fix our interest only on what is grand or beautiful. We are never left to dwell long together on scenes of death, and when the battle is at its fiercest,

our minds are called off by the rapid introduction (either by simile or some softer turn of human feeling) of other associations, not contrived as an inferior artist would contrive, to deepen our emotions, but to soften and relieve them.

Two warriors meet, and exchange their high words of defiance; we hear the grinding of the spear-head, as it pierces shield and breast-plate, and the crash of the armour, as this or that hero falls. But at once, instead of being left at his side to see him bleed, we are summoned away to the soft water meadow, the lazy river, the tall poplar, now waving its branches against the sky, now lying its length along in the grass beside the water, and the wood-cutter with peaceful industry labouring and lopping at it. In the thick of the universal mêlée, when the stones and arrows are raining on the combatants, and some furious hailstorm is the slightest illustration with which we should expect him to heighten the effect of the human tempest, so sure Homer is that he has painted the thing itself in its own intense reality, that his simile is the stillest phenomenon in all nature—a stillness of activity, infinitely expressive of the density of the shower of missiles, yet falling like oil on water on the ruffled picture of the battle; the snow descending in the *still* air, covering first hills, then plains and fields and farmsteads; covering the rocks down to the very water's edge, and clogging the waves as they roll in. Again in that fearful death-wrestle at the Grecian wall, when gates and battlements are sprinkled over with blood, and neither Greeks nor Trojans can force their way against the other, we have, first, as an image of the fight itself, two men in the field, with measuring rods, disputing over a land boundary; and for the equipoise of the two armies, the softest of all home scenes, a poor working woman weighing out her wool before weaving it, to earn a scanty subsistence for herself and for her children.

Of course the similes are not all of this kind; it would be monotonous if they were; but they occur often enough to mark their meaning. In the direct narrative, too, we see the same tendency. Sarpedon struck through the thigh is borne off the field, the long spear trailing from the wound, and there is too much haste to draw it out. Hector flies past him and has no time to speak; all is dust, hurry, and confusion. Even Homer can only pause for a moment, but in three lines he lays the wounded hero under a tree, he brings a dear friend to his side, and we refresh ourselves in a beautiful scene, when the lance is taken out and Sarpedon faints, and comes slowly back to life, with the cool air fanning him. We may look in vain through the *Nibelungen Lied* for anything like this. The Swabian poet can be tender before the battle, but in the battle itself his barbaric nature is too strong for him, and he scents nothing but blood. In the *Iliad*, on the contrary, the very battles of the gods, grand and awful as they are, relieve rather than increase the human horror. In the magnificent scene, where Achilles, weary with slaughter, pauses on the bank of the Scamander, and the angry river god, whose course is checked by the bodies of the slain, swells up to revenge them and destroy him, the natural and the supernatural are so strangely blended, that when Poseidon lights the forest, and god meets god and element meets element, the convulsion is too tremendous to enhance the fierceness of Achilles; it concentrates the interest on itself, and Achilles and Hector, flying Trojan and pursuing Greek, for the time melt out and are forgotten.

We do not forget that there is nothing of this kind, no relief, no softening, in the great scene at the conclusion of the *Odyssey*. All is stern enough and terrible enough there; more terrible, if possible, because more distinct, than its modern counterpart in Criem-

hildas Hall. But there is an obvious reason for this, and it does not make against what we have been saying. It is not delight in slaughter, but it is the stern justice of revenge which we have here; not, as in the *Iliad*, hero meeting hero, but the long crime receiving at last its Divine punishment; the breaking of the one storm, which from the beginning has been slowly and awfully gathering.

With Homer's treatment of a battle-field, and as illustrating the conclusion which we argue from it, we are tempted to draw parallels from two modern poets—one a German, who was taken away in the morning of his life; the other, the most gifted of modern Englishmen. Each of these two has attempted the same subject, and the treatment in each case embodies, in a similar manner, modern ways of thinking about it.

The first is from the *Albigenses* of young Lenau, who has since died lunatic, we have heard, as he was not unlikely to have died with such thoughts in him. It is the eve which followed one of those terrible struggles at Toulouse, and the poet's imagination is hanging at moon-rise over the scene. "The low broad field scattered over thick with corpses, all silent, dead,—the last sob spent,"—the priest's thanksgiving for the Catholic victory having died into an echo, and only the "vultures crying their Te Deum laudamus."

> Hat Gott der Herr den Körperstoff erschaffen,
> Hat ihn hervorgebracht ein böser Geist,
> Darüber stritten sie mit allen Waffen
> Und werden von den Vögeln nun gespeist,
> Die, ohne ihren Ursprung nachzufragen,
> Die Körper da sich lassen wohl behagen.

"Was it God the Lord who formed the substance of their bodies? or did some evil spirit bring it forth? It was for this with all their might they fought, and now they are devoured there by the wild birds, who sit

gorging merrily over their carrion, *without asking from whence it came.*"

In Homer, as we saw, the true hero is master over death—death has no terror for him. He meets it, if it is to be, calmly and proudly, and then it is over; whatever offensive may follow after it, is concealed, or at least passed lightly over. Here, on the contrary, everything most offensive is dwelt upon with an agonising intensity, and the triumph of death is made to extend, not over the body only, but over the soul, whose heroism it turns to mockery. The cause in which a man dies, is what can make his death beautiful; but here nature herself, in her stern, awful way, is reading her sentence over the cause itself as a wild and frantic dream. We ought to be revolted—doubly revolted, one would think, and yet we are not so; instead of being revolted, we are affected with a sense of vast, sad magnificence. Why is this? Because we lose sight of the scene, or lose the sense of its horror, in the confusion of the spirit. It is the true modern tragedy; the note which sounds through Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, through *Hamlet*, through *Faust*. All the deeper trials of the modern heart might be gathered out of those few lines; the sense of wasted nobleness—nobleness spending its energies upon what time seems to be pronouncing no better than a dream—at any rate, misgivings, sceptic and distracting; yet the heart the while, in spite of the uncertainty of the issue, remaining true to itself. If the spirit of the Albigensian warriors had really broken down, or if the poet had pointed his lesson so as to say, Truth is a lie; faith is folly; eat, drink, and die,—then his picture would have been revolting; but the noble spirit remains, though it is borne down and trifled with by destiny, and therefore it is not revolting but tragic.

Far different from this—as far inferior in tone to Lenau's lines, as it exceeds them in beauty of workman-

ship—is the well-known picture of the scene under the wall in the *Siege of Corinth*:

He saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival;
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunch'd o'er the whiter skull,
As it slipp'd through their jaws when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's repast.
And Alp knew, by the turbans that roll'd on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:
. . . . . .
The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.
Close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sate a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

For a parallel to the horribleness of this wonderfully painted scene we need not go to the *Nibelungen*, for we shall find nothing like it there: we must go back to the carved slabs which adorned the banquet halls of the Assyrian kings, where the foul birds hover over the stricken fields, and trail from their talons the entrails of the slain.

And for what purpose does Byron introduce these frightful images? Was it in contrast to the exquisite moonlight which tempts the renegade out of his tent? Was it to bring his mind into a fit condition to be worked upon by the vision of Francesca? It does but mar and untune the softening influences of nature, which might have been rendered more powerful, perhaps, by some slight touch to remind him of his past day's work, but are blotted out and paralysed by such a mass of horrors.

To go back to Homer.

We must omit for the present any notice of the domestic pictures, of which there are so many, in the palaces of Ulysses, of Nestor, or of Alcinous; of the games, so manly, yet, in point of refinement, so superior even to those of our own middle ages; of the supreme good of life as the Greeks conceived it, and of the arts by which they endeavoured to realise that good. It is useless to notice such things briefly, and the detail would expand into a volume. But the impression which we gather from them is the same which we have gathered all along—that if the proper aim of all human culture be to combine, in the highest measure in which they are compatible, the two elements of refinement and of manliness, then Homer's age was cultivated to a degree the like of which the earth has not witnessed since. There was more refinement under Pericles, as there is more in modern London and Paris; but there was, and there is, infinitely more vice. There was more fierceness (greater manliness there never was) in the times of feudalism. But take it for all in all, and in a mere human sense, apart from any other aspect of the world which is involved in Christianity, it is difficult to point to a time when life in general was happier, and the character of man set in a more noble form. If we have drawn the picture with too little shadow, let it be allowed for. The shadow was there, doubtless, though we see it only in a few dark spots. The *Margites* would have supplied the rest, but the *Margites*, unhappily for us, is lost. Even heroes have their littlenesses, and Comedy is truer to the details of littleness than Tragedy or Epic. The grand is always more or less ideal, and the elevation of a moment is sublimed into the spirit of a life. Comedy, therefore, is essential for the representing of men; and there were times, doubtless, when the complexion of Agamemnon's greatness was discoloured, like Prince Henry's, by remember-

ing, when he was weary, that poor creature—small beer—*i.e.* if the Greeks had got any.

A more serious discoloration, however, we are obliged to say that we find in Homer himself, in the soil or taint which even he is obliged to cast over the position of women. In the *Iliad*, where there is no sign of male slavery, women had already fallen under the chain, and though there does not seem to have been any practice of polygamy, the female prisoners fell, as a matter of course, into a more degraded position. It is painful, too, to observe that their own feelings followed the practice of the times, and that they composed themselves to bear without reluctance whatever their destiny forced upon them. When Priam ventured into the Grecian camp for Hector's body, and stood under the roof of Achilles, he endured to do what, as he says, no mortal father had ever yet endured—to give his hand to his son's destroyer. Briseis, whose bed was made desolate by the hand of the same Achilles, finds it her one greatest consolation, that the conqueror stoops to choose her to share his own. And when Hector in his last sad parting scene anticipates a like fate for his own Andromache, it is not with the revolted agony of horror with which such a possible future would be regarded by a modern husband; nor does Andromache, however bitterly she feels the danger, protest, as a modern wife would do, that there was no fear for her—that death by sorrow's hand, or by her own, would preserve her to rejoin him.

Nor, again, was unfaithfulness, of however long duration, conclusively fatal against a wife; for we meet Helen, after a twenty years' elopement, again the quiet, hospitable mistress in the Spartan palace, entertaining her husband's guests with an easy matronly dignity, and not afraid even in Menelaus's presence to allude to the past—in strong terms of self-reproach, indeed, but with nothing like despairing prostration.

Making the worst of this, however, yet even in this respect the Homeric Greeks were better than their contemporaries in Palestine; and on the whole there was, perhaps, no time anterior to Christianity when women held a higher place, or the relation between wife and husband was of a more free and honourable kind.

For we have given but one side of the picture. When a woman can be the theme of a poet, her nature cannot be held in slight esteem; and there is no doubt that Penelope is Homer's heroine in the *Odyssey*. One design, at least, which Homer had before him was to vindicate the character of the virtuous matron against the stain which Clytemnestra had inflicted on it. Clytemnestra has every advantage, Penelope every difficulty: the trial of the former lasted only half as long as that of the latter. Agamemnon in leaving her gave herself and his house in charge to a divine ἀοιδός, a heaven-inspired prophet, who should stand between her and temptation, and whom she had to murder before her passion could have its way. Penelope had to bear up alone for twenty weary years, without a friend, without a counsellor, and with even a child whose constancy was wavering. It is obvious that Homer designed this contrast. The story of the Argos tragedy is told again and again. The shade of Agamemnon himself forebodes a fate like his own to Ulysses. It is Ulysses's first thought when he wakes from his sleep to find himself in his own land; and the scene in Hades, in the last book, seems only introduced that the husband of Clytemnestra may meet the shades of the Ithacan suitors, and learn, in their own tale of the sad issue of their wooing, how far otherwise it had fared with Ulysses than with himself. Women, therefore, according to Homer, were as capable of heroic virtue as men were, and the ideal of this heroism is one to which we have scarcely added.

For the rest, there is no trace of any oriental seraglio

system. The sexes lived together in easy unaffected intercourse. The ladies appeared in society naturally and gracefully, and their chief occupations were household matters, care of clothes and linen, and other domestic arrangements. When a guest came, they prepared his dressing-room, settled the bath, and laid out the conveniences of his toilet-table. In their leisure hours, they were to be found, as now, in the hall or the saloon, and their work-table contained pretty much the same materials. Helen was winding worsted as she entertained Telemachus, and Andromache worked roses in very modern cross-stitch. A literalist like Mr. Mackay, who finds that the Israelites were cannibals, from such expressions as "drinking the blood of the slain," might discover, perhaps, a similar unpleasant propensity in an excited wish of Hecuba, that she might eat the heart of Achilles; but in the absence of other evidence, it is unwise in either case to press a metaphor; and the food of ladies, wherever Homer lets us see it, is very innocent cake and wine, with such fruits as were in season. To judge by Nausicaa, their breeding must have been exquisite. Nausicaa standing still, when the uncouth figure of Ulysses emerged from under the wood, all sea slime and nakedness, and only covered with a girdle of leaves—standing still to meet him when the other girls ran away tittering and terrified, is the perfect conception of true female modesty; and in the whole scene between them, Homer shows the most finished understanding of the delicate and tremulous relations which occur occasionally in the accidents of intercourse between highly cultivated men and women, and which he could only have learnt by living in a society where men and women met and felt in the way which he has described.

Who, then, was Homer? What was he? When did he live? History has absolutely nothing to answer. His poems were not written; for the art of writing (at

any rate for a poet's purpose) was unknown to him. There is a vague tradition that the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*, and a comic poem called the *Margites*, were composed by an Ionian whose name was Homer, about four hundred years before Herodotus, or in the ninth century B.C. We know certainly that these poems were preserved by the Rhapsodists, or popular reciters, who repeated them at private parties or festivals, until writing came into use, and they were fixed in a less precarious form. A later story was current, that we owe the collection to Pisistratus; but an exclusive claim for him was probably only Athenian conceit. It is incredible that men of genius in Homer's own land —Alcæus, for instance—should have left such a work to be done by a foreigner. But this is really all which is known; and the creation of the poems lies in impenetrable mystery. Nothing remains to guide us, therefore, except internal evidence (strangely enough, it is the same with Shakespeare), and it has led to wild conclusions; yet the wildest is not without its use; it has commonly something to rest upon; and internal evidence is only really valuable when outward testimony has been sifted to the uttermost. The present opinion seems to be, that each poem is unquestionably the work of one man; but whether both poems are the work of the same is yet *sub judice*. The Greeks believed they were; and that is much. There are remarkable points of resemblance in style, yet not greater than the resemblances in the *Two Noble Kinsmen* and in the *Yorkshire Tragedy* to *Macbeth* and *Hamlet;* and there are more remarkable points of non-resemblance, which deepen upon us the more we read. On the other hand, tradition is absolute. If the style of the *Odyssey* is sometimes unlike the *Iliad*, so is one part of the *Iliad* sometimes unlike another. It is hard to conceive a genius equal to the creation of either *Iliad* or *Odyssey* to have existed without leaving so much as a legend of his name;

and the difficulty of criticising style accurately in an old language will be appreciated by those who have tried their hand in their own language with the disputed plays of Shakespeare. There are heavy difficulties every way; and we shall best conclude our own subject by noting down briefly the most striking points of variation of which as yet no explanation has been attempted. We have already noticed several: the non-appearance of male slavery in the *Iliad* which is common in the *Odyssey;* the notion of a future state; and perhaps a fuller cultivation in the female character. Andromache is as delicate as Nausicaa, but she is not as grand as Penelope; and in marked contrast to the feeling expressed by Briseis, is the passage where the grief of Ulysses over the song of Demodocus is compared to the grief of a young wife flinging herself on the yet warm body of her husband, and looking forward to her impending slavery with feelings of horror and repulsion. But these are among the slightest points in which the two poems are dissimilar. Not only are there slaves in the *Odyssey*, but there are θῆτες, or serfs, an order with which we are familiar in later times, but which again are not in the *Iliad.* In the *Odyssey* the Trojans are called ἐπιβήτορες ἵππων, which must mean *riders.* In the *Iliad,* horses are never ridden; they are always in harness.

Wherever in the *Odyssey* the Trojan war is alluded to (and it is very often), in no one case is the allusion to anything which is mentioned in the *Iliad.* We hear of the wooden horse, the taking of Troy, the death of Achilles, the contention of Ulysses with Ajax for his arms. It might be said that the poet wished to supply afterwards indirectly what he had left in the *Iliad* untold; but again, this is impossible, for a very curious reason. The *Iliad* opens with the wrath of Achilles, which caused such bitter woe to the Achaians. In the *Odyssey* it is still the wrath of Achilles; but singularly *not with Agamemnon, but with Ulysses.* Ulysses to the

author of the *Odyssey* was a far grander person at *Troy* than he appears in the *Iliad*. In the latter poem he is great, but far from one of the greatest; in the other, he is evidently the next to Achilles; and it seems almost certain that whoever wrote the *Odyssey* was working from some other legend of the war. There were a thousand versions of it. The tale of Ilium was set to every lyre in Greece, and the relative position of the heroes was doubtless varied according to the sympathies or the patriotism of the singer. The character of Ulysses is much stronger in the *Odyssey;* and even when the same qualities are attributed to him—his soft-flowing tongue, his cunning, and his eloquence—they are held in very different estimation. The Homer of the *Iliad* has little liking for a talker. Thersites is his pattern specimen of such; and it is the current scoff at unready warriors to praise their father's courage, and then to add—

ἀλλὰ τὸν υἱὸν
γείνατο εἶο χέρηα μάχῃ, ἀγορῇ δέ τ' ἀμείνω.

But the Phœacian Lord who ventured to reflect, in the *Iliad* style, on the supposed unreadiness of Ulysses, is taught a different notion of human excellence. Ulysses tells him that he is a fool. "The gods," Ulysses says, "do not give all good things to all men, and often a man is made unfair to look upon, but over his ill favour they fling, like a garland, a power of lovely speech, and the people delight to *look* on him. He speaks with modest dignity, and he shines among the multitude. As he walks through the city, men gaze on him as on a god."

Differences like these, however, are far from decisive. The very slightest external evidence would weigh them all down together. Perhaps the following may be of more importance:—

In both poems there are "questionings of destiny," as the modern phrase goes. The thing which we call

human life is looked in the face—this little chequered island of lights and shadows, in the middle of an ocean of darkness; and in each we see the sort of answer which the poet finds for himself, and which might be summed up briefly in the last words of Ecclesiastes, "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." But the world bears a different aspect, and the answer looks different in its application. In the *Iliad*, in spite of the gloom of Achilles, and his complaint of the double urn, the sense of life, on the whole, is sunny and cheerful. There is no yearning for anything beyond—nothing vague, nothing mystical. The earth, the men, the gods, have all a palpable reality about them. From first to last, we know where we are, and what we are about. In the *Odyssey* we are breathing another atmosphere. The speculations on the moral mysteries of our being hang like a mist over us from the beginning to the end; and the cloud from time to time descends on the actors and envelopes them with a preternatural halo. The poet evidently dislikes the expression of "suffering being the lot of mortals," as if it had been abused already for ungodly purposes. In the opening of the first book, Zeus reproves the folly of mortal men for casting the blame upon the gods when they themselves, in spite of all the gods can do to save them, persist in their own perverseness; and we never know as we go on, so fast we pass from one to the other, when we are among mere human beings, and when among the spiritual or the mystical. Those sea-nymphs, those cannibals, those enchantresses, if intended to be real, are neither mortal nor divine—at any rate, like nothing divine which we had seen in Olympus, or on the plains of Ilium; and at times there is a strangeness even in the hero himself. Sometimes it is Ulysses painfully toiling his way home across the unknown ocean; sometimes it is we that are Ulysses, and that unknown ocean is the life across which we are wandering, with

too many Circes, and Sirens, and " Isles of Error " in our path. In the same spirit death is no longer the end; and on every side long vistas seem to stretch away into the infinite, peopled with shadowy forms.

But, as if this palpable initiation into the unseen were still insufficient or unconvincing, the common ground on which we are treading sometimes shakes under us, and we feel as Humboldt describes himself to have felt at the first shock of an earthquake. Strange pieces of mysterious wildness are let fall in our way, coming suddenly on us like spectres, and vanishing without explanation or hint of their purpose. What are those Phœacian ships meant for, which required neither sail nor oar, but of their own selves read the hearts of those they carried, and bore them wherever they would go?—or the wild end of the ship which carried Ulysses home?—or that terrible piece of second sight in the Hall at Ithaca, for which the seer was brought from Pylos?—or those islands, one of which is for ever wasting while another is born into being to complete the number?—or those mystical sheep and oxen, which knew neither age nor death, nor ever had offspring born to them, and whose flesh upon the spits began to crawl and bellow?—or Helen singing round the horse inside the Trojan walls, when every Grecian chief's heart fainted in him as he thought he heard the voice of his own dear wife far away beyond the sea?

In the far gates of the Lœstrygones, " where such a narrow rim of night divided day from day, that a man who needed not sleep might earn a double hire, and the cry of the shepherd at evening driving home his flock was heard by the shepherd going out in the morning to pasture," we have, perhaps, some tale of a Phœnician mariner who had wandered into the North Seas, and seen " the Norway sun set into sunrise." But what shall we say to that Syrian isle, " where disease is not, nor hunger, nor thirst, and where, when men grow old,

Apollo comes with Artemis, and slays them with his silver bow?" There is nothing in the *Iliad* like any of these stories.

Yet, when all is said, it matters little who wrote the poems. Each is so magnificent, that to have written both could scarcely have increased the greatness of the man who had written one; and if there were two Homers, the earth is richer by one more divine-gifted man than we had known. After all, it is perhaps more easy to believe that the differences which we seem to see arise from Homer's own choice of the material which best suited two works so different, than that nature was so largely prodigal as to have created in one age and in one people two such men; for whether one or two, the authors of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* stand alone with Shakespeare far away above mankind.

REPRESENTATIVE MEN

From St. Anselm to Mr. Emerson, from the *Acta Sanctorum* to the *Representative Men;* so far in seven centuries have we travelled. The races of the old Ideals have become extinct like the Preadamite Saurians; and here are our new pattern specimens on which we are to look, and take comfort and encouragement to ourselves. The philosopher, the mystic, the poet, the sceptic, the man of the world, the writer; these are the present moral categories, the *summa genera* as Mr. Emerson arranges them. From every point of view an exceptional catalogue. They are all thinkers, to begin with, except one; and thought is but a poor business man compared to action. Saints did not earn canonisation by the number of their folios; and if the necessities of the times are driving our best men out of action into philosophy and verse-making, so much the worse for them and so much the worse for the world. The one pattern actor, "the man of the world," is Napoleon Bonaparte, not in the least a person, as we are most of us at present feeling, whose example the world desires to see followed. Mr. Emerson would have done better if he had kept to his own side of the Atlantic. He is paying his own countrymen but a poor compliment by coming exclusively to Europe for his heroes; and he would be doing us in Europe more real good by a great deal if he would tell us something of the backwoodsmen in Kentucky and Ohio. However, to let that pass; it is not our business here to quarrel either with him or his book; and the book stands at the head of our article rather because it presents a very noticeable deficiency of which its writer is either unaware or careless.

These six predicables, as the logician would call them, what are they? Are they *ultimate genera* refusing to be classified further? or is there any other larger type of greatness under which they fall? In the naturalist's catalogue, poet, sceptic, and the rest will all be classified as men—man being an intelligible entity. Has Mr. Emerson any similar clear idea of great man or good man? If so, where is he? what is he? It is desirable that we should know. Men will not get to heaven because they lie under one or other of these predicables. What is that supreme type of character which is in itself good or great, unqualified with any further *differentia?* Is there any such? and if there be, where is the representative of this? It may be said that the generic man exists nowhere in an ideal unity—that if considered at all, he must be abstracted from the various sorts of men, black and white, tame or savage. So if we would know what a great man or a good man means, we must look to some specific line in which he is good, and abstract our general idea. And that is very well, provided we know what we are about; provided we understand, in our abstracting, how to get the essential idea distinctly out before ourselves, without entangling ourselves in the accidents. Human excellence, after all the teaching of the last eighteen hundred years, ought to be something palpable by this time. It is the one thing which we are all taught to seek and to aim at forming in ourselves; and if representative men are good for anything at all, it can only be, not as they represent merely curious combinations of phenomena, but as they illustrate us in a completely realised form, what we are, every single one of us, equally interested in understanding. It is not the "great man" as "man of the world" that we care for, but the "man of the world" as a "great man"—which is a very different thing. Having to live in this world, how to live greatly here is the question for us; not, how, being great, we

can cast our greatness in a worldly mould. There may be endless successful " men of the world " who are mean or little enough all the while; and the Emersonian attitude will confuse success with greatness, or turn our ethics into a chaos of absurdity. So it is with everything which man undertakes and works in. Life has grown complicated; and for one employment in old times there are a hundred now. But it is not *they* which are anything, but *we*. We are the end, they are but the means, the material—like the clay, or the marble, or the bronze, in which the sculptor carves his statue. The *form* is everything; and what is the form? From nursery to pulpit every teacher rings on the one note—be good, be noble, be men. What is goodness then? and what is nobleness? and where are the examples? We do not say that there are none. God forbid! That is not what we are meaning at all. If the earth had ceased to bear men pleasant in God's sight, it would have passed away like the cities in the plain. But who are they? which are they? how are we to know them. They are our leaders in this life-campaign of ours. If we could see them, we would follow them, and save ourselves many and many a fall, and many an enemy whom we could have avoided, if we had known of him. It cannot be that the thing is so simple, when names of highest reputation are wrangled over, and such poor counterfeits are mobbed with applauding followers. In art and science we can detect the charlatan, but in life we do not recognise him so readily—we do not recognise the charlatan, and we do not recognise the true man. Rajah Brooke is alternately a hero or a pirate; and fifty of the best men among us are likely to have fifty opinions on the merits of Elizabeth or Cromwell.

But surely, men say, the thing is simple. The commandments are simple. It is not that people do not know, but that they will not act up to what they know.

We hear a great deal of this in sermons, and elsewhere; and of course, as everybody's experience will tell him, there is a great deal too much reason why we should hear of it. But there are two sorts of duty, positive and negative; what we ought to do, and what we ought not to do. To the latter of these, conscience is pretty much awake; but by cunningly concentrating its attention on one side of the matter, conscience has contrived to forget altogether that any other sort exists at all. "Doing wrong" is breaking a commandment which forbids us to do some particular thing. That is all the notion which in common language is attached to the idea. Do not kill, steal, lie, swear, commit adultery, or break the Lord's day—these are the commandments; very simple, doubtless, and easy to be known. But, after all, what are they? They are no more than the very first and rudimental conditions of goodness. Obedience to these is not more than a small part of what is required of us; it is no more than the foundation on which the superstructure of character is to be raised. To go through life, and plead at the end of it that we have not broken any of these commandments, is but what the unprofitable servant did, who kept his talent carefully unspent, and yet was sent to outer darkness for his uselessness. Suppose these commandments obeyed—what then? It is but a small portion of our time which, we will hope, is spent in resisting temptation to break them. What are we to do with the rest of it? Or suppose them (and this is a high step indeed) resolved into love of God and love of our neighbour. Suppose we know that it is our duty to love our neighbour as ourselves. What are we to do, then, for our neighbour, besides abstaining from doing him injury? The saints knew very well what *they* were to do; but our duties, we suppose, lie in a different direction; and it does not appear that we have found them. "We have duties so positive to our

neighbour," says Bishop Butler, "that if we give more of our time and of our attention to ourselves and our own matters than is our just due, we are taking what is not ours, and are guilty of fraud." What does Bishop Butler mean? It is easy to answer generally. In detail, it is not only difficult, it is impossible to answer at all. The modern world says—"Mind your own business, and leave others to take care of theirs;" and whoever among us aspires to more than the negative abstaining from wrong, is left to his own guidance. There is no help for him, no instruction, no modern ideal which shall be to him what the heroes were to the young Greek or Roman, or the martyrs to the Middle-Age Christian. There is neither track nor foot-print in the course which he will have to follow, while, as in the old fairy tale, the hill-side which he is climbing is strewed with black stones mocking at him with their thousand voices. We have no moral criterion, no idea, no counsels of perfection; and surely this is the reason why education is so little prosperous with us; because the only education worth anything is the education of character, and we cannot educate a character unless we have some notion of what we would form. Young men, as we know, are more easily led than driven. It is a very old story that to forbid this and that (so curious and contradictory is our nature), is to stimulate a desire to do it. But place before a boy a figure of a noble man; let the circumstances in which he has earned his claim to be called noble be such as the boy himself sees round himself; let him see this man rising over his temptation, and following life victoriously and beautifully forward, and, depend on it, you will kindle his heart as no threat of punishment here or anywhere will kindle it.

People complain of the sameness in the *Lives of the Saints*. It is that very sameness which is the secret of their excellence. There is a sameness in the heroes

of the *Iliad;* there is a sameness in the historical heroes of Greece and Rome. A man is great as he contends best with the circumstances of his age, and those who fight best with the same circumstances of course grow like each other. And so with our own age—if we really could have the lives of our best men written for us (and written well, by men who knew what to look for, and what it was on which they should insist), they would be just as like each other too, and would for that reason be of such infinite usefulness. They would not be like the old Ideals. Times are changed; they were one thing, we have to be another—their enemies are not ours. There is a moral metempsychosis in the change of era, and probably no lineament of form or feature remains identical; yet surely not because less is demanded of us—not less, but more—more, as we are again and again told on Sundays from the pulpits; if the preachers would but tell us in what that "more" consists. The loftiest teaching we ever hear is, that we are to work in the spirit of love; but we are still left to generalities, while action divides and divides into ever smaller details. It is as if the Church said to the painter or to the musician whom she was training, you must work in the spirit of love and in the spirit of truth; and then adding, that the Catholic painting or the Catholic music was what he was *not* to imitate, suppose that she had sent him out into the world equipped fully for his enterprise.

And what comes of this? Emersonianism has come, modern hagiology has come, and Ainsworth novels and Bulwer novels, and a thousand more unclean spirits. We have cast out the Catholic devil, and the Puritan has swept the house and garnished it; but as yet we do not see any symptoms showing of a healthy incoming tenant, and there may be worse states than Catholicism. If we wanted proof of the utter spiritual disintegration into which we have fallen, it would be enough that we

have no biographies. We do not mean that we have no written lives of our fellow-creatures; there are enough and to spare. But not any one is there in which the ideal tendencies of this age can be discerned in their true form; not one, or hardly any one, which we could place in a young man's hands, with such warm confidence as would let us say of it—"Read that; there is a man—such a man as you ought to be; read it, meditate on it; see what he was, and how he made himself what he was, and try and be yourself like him." This, as we saw lately, is what Catholicism did. It had its one broad type of perfection, which in countless thousands of instances was perpetually reproducing itself—a type of character not especially belonging to any one profession; it was a type to which priest or layman, knight or bishop, king or peasant, might equally aspire: men of all sorts aspired to it, and men of all sorts attained to it; and as fast as she had realised them (so to say), the Church took them in her arms, and held them up before the world as fresh and fresh examples of victory over the devil. This is what that Church was able to do, and it is what we cannot do; and yet, till we can learn to do it, no education which we can offer has any chance of prospering. Perfection is not easy; it is of all things most difficult; difficult to know and difficult to practise. Rules of life will not do; even if our analysis of life in all its possible forms were as complete as it is in fact rudimentary, they would still be inefficient. The philosophy of the thing might be understood, but the practice would be as far off as ever. In life, as in art, and as in mechanics, the only profitable teaching is the teaching by example. Your mathematician, or your man of science, may discourse excellently on the steam engine, yet he cannot make one; he cannot make a bolt or a screw. The master workman in the engine-room does not teach his apprentice the theory of expansion, or of atmospheric pressure; he

guides his hand upon the turncock, he practises his eye upon the index, and he leaves the science to follow when the practise has become mechanical. So it is with everything which man learns to do; and yet for the art of arts, the trade of trades, for *life*, we content ourselves with teaching our children the catechism and the commandments; we preach them sermons on the good of being good, and the evil of being evil; in our higher education we advance to the theory of habit and the freedom of the will; and then, when failure follows failure, *ipsa experientia reclamante*, we hug ourselves with a complacent self-satisfied reflection that the fault is not ours, that all which men could do we have done. The freedom of the will!—as if a blacksmith would ever teach a boy to make a horseshoe by telling him he could make one if he chose.

In setting out on our journey through life, we are like strangers set to find their way across a difficult and entangled country. It is not enough for us to know that others have set out as we set out, that others have faced the lions in the path and overcome them, and have arrived at last at the journey's end. Such a knowledge may give us heart—but the help it gives is nothing beyond teaching us that the difficulties are not insuperable. It is the *track*, which these others, these pioneers of godliness, have beaten in, that we cry to have shown us; not a mythic "Pilgrim's Progress," but a real path trodden in by real men. Here is a crag, and there is but one spot where it can be climbed; here is a morass or a river, and there is a bridge in one place, and a ford in another. There are robbers in this forest, and wild beasts in that; the tracks cross and recross, and, as in the old labyrinth, only one will bring us right. The age of the saints has passed; they are no longer any service to us; we must walk in their spirit, but not along their road; and in this sense we say, that we have no pattern great men, no biographies,

no history, which are of real service to us. It is the remarkable characteristic of the present time, as far as we know—a new phenomenon since history began to be written; one more proof, if we wanted proof, that we are entering on another era. In our present efforts at educating, we are like workmen setting about to make a machine which they know is to be composed of plates and joints, and wheels and screws and springs:—they temper their springs, and smooth their plates, and carve out carefully their wheels and screws, but having no idea of the machine in its combination, they either fasten them together at random, and create some monster of disjointed undirected force, or else pile the finished materials into a heap together, and trust to some organic spirit in themselves which will shape them into unity. We do not know what we would be at. Make our children into men, says one. But what sort of men? The Greeks were men, so were the Jews, so were the Romans, so were the old Saxons, the Normans, the Duke of Alva's Spaniards, and Cromwell's Puritans. These were all men, and strong men too; yet all different, and all differently trained. "Into Christian men," say others. But the saints were Christian men; yet the modern Englishmen have been offered the saints' biographies, and have with sufficient clearness expressed their opinion of them.

Alas! in all this confusion, only those keen-eyed children of this world find their profit; their idea does not readily forsake them. In their substantial theory of life, the business of man in it is to get on, to thrive, to prosper, to have riches in possession. They will have their little ones taught, by the law of demand, what will fetch its price in the market; and this is clear, bold, definite, straightforward — and therefore it is strong, and works its way. It works and will prevail for a time; for a time—but not for ever, unless indeed religion be all a dream, and our airy notions of ourselves

a vision out of which our wise age is the long-waited-for awakening.

It would be a weary and odious business to follow out all the causes which have combined to bring us into our present state. Many of them lie deep down in the roots of humanity, and many belong to that large system of moral causation which works through vast masses of mankind—which, impressing peculiar and necessary features on the eras as they succeed, leaves individuals but a limited margin within which they may determine what they will be. One cause, however, may be mentioned, which lies near the surface, and which for many reasons it may be advantageous to consider. At first thought it may seem superficial and captious; but we do not think it will at the second, and still less at the third.

Protestantism, and even Anglo-Protestantism, has not been without its great men. In their first fierce struggle for existence, these creeds gave birth to thousands whose names may command any rank in history. But alone of all forms of religion, past or present, and we will add (as we devoutly hope), to come (for in her present form, at least, the Church of England cannot long remain), Protestantism knows not what to do with her own offspring; she is unable to give them open and honourable recognition. Entangled in speculative theories of human depravity, of the worthlessness of the best which the best men can do, Protestantism is unable to say heartily of any one, "Here is a good man to be loved and remembered with reverence." There are no saints in the English Church. The English Church does not pretend to saints. Her children may live purely, holily, and beautifully, but her gratitude for them must be silent; she may not thank God for them—she may not hold them up before her congregation. They may or they may not have been really good, but she may not commit herself to

attributing a substantial value to the actions of a nature so corrupt as that of man. Among Protestants, the Church of England is the worst, for she is not wholly Protestant. In the utterness of the self-abnegation of the genuine Protestant there is something approaching the heroic. But she, ambitious of being Catholic as well as Protestant, like that old Church of evil memory which would be neither hot nor cold, will neither wholly abandon merit, nor wholly claim it; but halts on between two opinions, claiming and disclaiming, saying and in the next breath again unsaying. The Oxford student being asked for the doctrine of the Anglican Church on good works, knew the rocks and whirlpools among which an unwary answer might involve him, and steering midway between Scylla and Charybdis, replied, with laudable caution, "a few of them would not do a man any harm." It is scarcely a caricature of the prudence of the Articles. And so at last it has come to this with us. The soldier can raise a column to his successful general; the halls of the law courts are hung round with portraits of the ermined sages; Newton has his statue, and Harvey and Watt, in the academies of the sciences; and each young aspirant after fame, entering for the first time upon the calling which he has chosen, sees high excellence highly honoured; sees the high career, and sees its noble ending, marked out each step of it in golden letters. But the Church's aisles are desolate, and desolate they must remain. There is no statue for the Christian. The empty niches stare out like hollow eye-sockets from the walls. Good men live in the Church and die in her, whose story written out or told would be of inestimable benefit, but she may not write it. She may speak of goodness, but not of the good man; as she may speak of sin, but may not censure the sinner. Her position is critical; the Dissenters would lay hold of it. She may not do it, but she will do what she can. She cannot tolerate an image indeed, or a

picture of her own raising; she has no praise to utter at her children's graves, when their lives have witnessed to her teaching. But if others will bear the expense and will risk the sin, she will offer no objection. Her walls are naked. The wealthy ones among her congregation may adorn them as they please; the splendour of a dead man's memorial shall be, not as his virtues were, but as his purse; and his epitaph may be brilliant according as there are means to pay for it. They manage things better at the museums and the institutes.

Let this pass, however, as the worst case. There are other causes at work besides the neglect of Churches; the neglect itself being as much a result as a cause. There is a common dead level over the world, to which Churches and teachers, however seemingly opposite, are alike condemned. As it is here in England, so it is with the American Emerson. The fault is not in them, but in the age of which they are no more than the indicators. We are passing out of old forms of activity into others new and on their present scale untried; and how to work nobly in them is the one problem for us all. Surius will not profit us, nor the *Mort d'Arthur*. Our calling is neither to the hermitage nor to the round table. Our work lies now in those peaceful occupations which, in ages called heroic, were thought unworthy of noble souls. In those it was the slave who tilled the ground, and wove the garments. It was the ignoble burgher who covered the sea with his ships, and raised up factories and workshops; and how far such occupations influenced the character, how they could be made to minister to loftiness of heart, and high and beautiful life, was a question which could not occur while the atmosphere of the heroic was on all sides believed so alien to them. Times have changed. The old hero-worship has vanished with the need of it; but no other has risen in its stead, and without it we wander in the

dark. The commonplaces of morality, the negative commandments, general exhortations to goodness, while neither speaker nor hearer can tell what they mean by goodness—these are all which now remain to us; and thrown into a life more complicated than any which the earth has yet experienced, we are left to wind our way through the labyrinth of its details without any clue except our own instincts, our own knowledge, our own hopes and desires.

We complain of generalities; we will not leave ourselves exposed to the same charge. We will mention a few of the thousand instances in which we cry for guidance and find none; instances on which those who undertake to teach us ought to have made up their minds.

On the surface at least of the Prayer-book, there seems to be something left remaining of the Catholic penitential system. Fasting is spoken of, and abstinence, and some form or other of self-inflicted self-denial is necessarily meant. This thing can by no possibility be unimportant, and we may well smile at the exclusive claims of a Church to the cure of our souls, who is unable to say what she thinks about it. Let us ask her living interpreters then, and what shall we get for an answer? either no answer at all, or contradictory answers; angrily, violently, passionately contradictory. Among the many voices, what is a young man to conclude? He will conclude naturally according to his inclination; and if he chooses right, it will most likely be on a wrong motive.

Again, *courage* is, on all hands, considered as an essential of high character. Among all fine people, old and modern, wherever we are able to get an insight into their training system, we find it a thing particularly attended to. The Greeks, the Romans, the old Persians, our own nation till the last two hundred years, whoever of mankind have turned out good for anything

anywhere, knew very well, that to exhort a boy to be brave without training him in it, would be like exhorting a young colt to submit to the bridle without breaking him in. Step by step, as he could bear it, the boy was introduced to danger, till his pulse ceased to be agitated, and he became familiarised with peril as his natural element. It was a matter of carefully considered, thoroughly recognised, and organised education. But courage now-a-days is not a paying virtue. Courage does not help to make money, and so we have ceased to care about it; and boys are left to educate one another by their own semi-brutal instincts, in this, which is perhaps the most important of all features in the human character. Schools, as far as the masters are concerned with them, are places for teaching Greek and Latin—that, and nothing more. At the universities, fox-hunting is, perhaps, the only discipline of the kind now to be found, and fox-hunting, by forbidding it and winking at it, the authorities have contrived to place on as demoralising a footing as ingenuity could devise.[1]

To pass from training to life. A boy has done with school and college; he has become a man, and has to choose his profession. It is the one most serious step which he has yet taken. In most cases, there is no recalling it. He believes that he is passing through life to eternity; that his chance of getting to heaven depends on what use he makes of his time; he prays every day that he may be delivered from temptation; it is his business to see that he does not throw himself into it. Now, every one of the many professions has a peculiar character of its own, which, with rare exceptions, it inflicts on those who follow it. There is the shopkeeper type, the manufacturer type, the lawyer type, the medical type, the clerical type, the soldier's, the sailor's. The nature of a man is "like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in;" and we can dis-

[1] Written 1850.

tinguish with ease, on the slightest intercourse, to what class a grown person belongs. It is to be seen in his look, in his words, in his tone of thought, his voice, gesture, even in his handwriting; and in everything which he does. Every human employment has its especial moral characteristic, its peculiar temptations, its peculiar influences—of a subtle and not easily analysed kind, and only to be seen in their effects. Here, therefore—here if anywhere, we want Mr. Emerson with his representatives, or the Church with her advice and warning. But, in fact, what attempt do we see to understand any of this, or even to acknowledge it; to master the moral side of the professions; to teach young men entering them what they are to expect, what to avoid, or what to seek? Where are the highest types—the pattern lawyer, and shopkeeper, and merchant? Are they all equally favourable to excellence of character? Do they offer equal opportunities? Which best suits this disposition, and which suits that? Alas! character is little thought of in the choice. It is rather, which shall I best succeed in? Where shall I make most money? Suppose an anxious boy to go for counsel to his spiritual mother; to go to her, and ask her to guide him. Shall I be a soldier? he says. What will she tell him? This and no more—you may, without sin. Shall I be a lawyer, merchant, manufacturer, tradesman, engineer? Still the same answer. But which is best? he demands. We do not know: we do not know. There is no guilt in either; you may take which you please, provided you go to church regularly, and are honest and good. If he is foolish enough to persist further, and ask, in what goodness and honesty consist in *his especial department* (whichever he selects), he will receive the same answer; in other words, he will be told to give every man his due and be left to find out for himself in what " his due " consists. It is like an artist telling his pupil to put the lights

and shadows in their due places, and leaving it to the pupil's ingenuity to interpret such instructive directions.

One more instance of an obviously practical kind. Masters, few people will now deny, owe certain duties to their workmen beyond payment at the competition price for their labour, and the workmen owe something to their masters beyond making their own best bargain. Courtesy, on the one side, and respect on the other, are at least due; and wherever human beings are brought in contact, a number of reciprocal obligations at once necessarily arise out of the conditions of their position. It is this question which at the present moment is convulsing an entire branch of English trade. It is this question which has shaken the Continent like an earthquake, and yet it is one which, the more it is thought about, the more clearly seems to refuse to admit of being dealt with by legislation. It is a question for the Gospel and not for the law. The duties are of the kind which it is the business, not of the State, but of the Church, to look to. Why is the Church silent? There are duties; let her examine them, sift them, prove them, and then point them out. Why not—why not? Alas! she cannot, she dare not give offence, and therefore must find none. It is to be feared that we have a rough trial to pass through, before we find our way and understand our obligations. Yet far off we seem to see a time when the lives, the actions of the really great —great good masters, great good landlords, great good working men—will be laid out once more before their several orders, laid out in the name of God, as once the saints' lives were; and the same sounds shall be heard in factory and in counting-house as once sounded through abbey, chapel, and cathedral aisle—"Look at these men; bless God for them, and follow them."

And let no one fear that, if such happy time were come, it would result in a tame and weary sameness; that the beautiful variety of individual form would be

lost, drilled away in regimental uniformity. Even if it were so, it need not be any the worse for us; we are not told to develop our individualities, we are told to bear fruit. The poor vagabond with all his individualities about him, if by luck he falls into the hands of the recruiting sergeant, finds himself, a year later, with his red coat and his twelve months' training, not a little the better for the loss of them. But such schooling as we have been speaking of will drill out only such individualities as are of the unworthy kind, and will throw the strength of the nature into the development of the healthiest features in it. Far more, as things now are, we see men sinking into sameness—an inorganic, unwholesome sameness, in which the higher nature is subdued, and the *man* is sacrificed to the profession. The circumstances of his life are his world; and he sinks under them, he does not conquer them. If he has to choose between the two, God's uniform is better than the world's. The first gives him freedom; the second takes it from him. Only here, as in everything, we must understand the nature of the element in which we work; understand it; understand the laws of it. Throw off the lower laws; the selfish, debasing influences of the profession; obey the higher; follow love, truthfulness, manliness; follow these first, and make the profession serve them; and that is freedom; there is none else possible for man.

Das Gesetz soll nur uns Freiheit geben;

and whatever individuality is lost in the process, we may feel assured that the devil has too much to do with, to make us care to be rid of it.

But how to arrive at this? so easy as it is to suggest on paper, so easy to foretell in words. Raise the level of public opinion, we might say; insist on a higher standard; in the economist's language, increase the demand for goodness, and the supply will follow; or, at

any rate, men will do their best. Until we require more of one another, more will not be provided. But this is but to restate the problem in other words. How are we to touch the heart; how to awaken the desire? We believe that the good man, the great man, whatever he be, prince or peasant, is really lovely; that really and truly, if we can only see him, he more than anything will move us; and at least, we have a right to demand that the artificial hindrances which prevent our lifting him above the crowd, shall be swept away. He in his beautiful life is a thousand times more God's witness than any preacher in a pulpit, and his light must not be concealed any more. As we said, what lies in the way of our sacred recognition of great men is more than anything else the Protestant doctrine of good works. We do not forget what it meant when the world first heard of it. It was a cry from the very sanctuary of the soul, flinging off and execrating the accursed theory of merits, the sickening parade of redundant saintly virtues, which the Roman Church had converted into stock, and dispensed for the benefit of the believers. This is not the place to pour out our nausea on so poor, yet so detestable a farce. But it seems with all human matters that as soon as spiritual truths are petrified into doctrines, it is another name for their death. They die, corrupt, and breed a pestilence. The doctrine of good works was hurled away by an instinct of generous feeling, and this feeling itself has again become dead, and a fresh disease has followed upon it. Nobody (or, at least, nobody good for anything) will lay a claim to merit for this or that good action which he may have done. Exactly in proportion as a man is really good, will be the eagerness with which he will refuse all credit for it; he will cry out, with all his soul, "Not unto us —not unto us."

And yet, practically, we all know and feel that between man and man there is an infinite moral difference;

one is good, one is bad, another hovers between the two; the whole of our conduct to each other is necessarily governed by a recognition of this fact, just as it is in the analogous question of the will. Ultimately, we are nothing of ourselves; we know that we are but what God has given us grace to be—we did not make ourselves—we do not keep ourselves here—we are but what in the eternal order of Providence we were designed to be—exactly that and nothing else; and yet we treat each other as responsible; we cannot help it. The most rigid Calvinist cannot eliminate his instincts; his loves and hatreds seem rather to deepen in intensity of colouring as, logically, his creed should lead him to conquer them as foolish. It is useless, it is impossible, to bring down these celestial mysteries upon our earth, to try to see our way by them, or determine our feelings by them; men are good, men are bad, relatively to us and to our understandings if you will, but still really, and so they must be treated.

There is no more mischievous falsehood than to persist in railing at man's nature, as if it were all vile together, as if the best and the worst which comes of it were in God's sight equally without worth. These denunciations tend too fatally to realise themselves. Tell a man that no good which he can do is of any value, and depend upon it he will take you at your word—most especially will the wealthy, comfortable, luxurious man, just the man who has most means to do good, and whom of all things it is most necessary to stimulate to it. Surely we should not be afraid. The instincts which God has placed in our hearts are too mighty for us to be able to extinguish them with doctrinal sophistry. We love the good man, we praise him, we admire him—we cannot help it; and surely it is mere cowardice to shrink from recognising it openly — thankfully, divinely recognising it. If true at all, there is no truth in heaven or earth of deeper practical importance to us;

and Protestantism must have lapsed from its once generous spirit, if it persists in imposing a dogma of its own upon our hearts, the touch of which is fatal as the touch of a torpedo to any high or noble endeavours after excellence.

"Drive out nature with a fork, she ever comes running back;" and while we leave out of consideration the reality, we are filling the chasm with inventions of our own. The only novels which are popular among us are those which picture the successful battles of modern men and women with modern life, which are imperfect shadows of those real battles which every reader has seen in some form or other, or has longed to see in his own small sphere. It shows where the craving lies if we had but the courage to meet it; why need we fall back on imagination to create what God has created ready for us? In every department of human life, in the more and the less, there is always one man who is the best, and one type of man which is the best, living and working his silent way to heaven in the very middle of us. Let us find this type then—let us see what it is which makes such men the best, and raise up their excellences into an acknowledged and open standard, of which they themselves shall be the living witnesses. Is there a landlord who is spending his money, not on pineries and hothouses, but on schools, and washhouses, and drains; who is less intent on the magnificence of his own grand house, than in providing cottages for his people where decency is possible; then let us not pass him by with a torpid wonder or a vanishing emotion of pleasure—rather let us seize him and raise him up upon a pinnacle, that other landlords may gaze upon him, if, perhaps, their hearts may prick them, and the world shall learn from what one man has done what they have a right to require that others shall do.

So it might be through the thousand channels of life. It should not be so difficult; the machinery is ready,

both to find your men and to use them. In theory, at least, every parish has its pastor, and the state of every soul is, or ought to be, known. We know not what turn things may take, or what silent changes are rushing on below us. Even while the present organisation remains—but, alas! no—it is no use to urge a Church bound hand and foot in State shackles to stretch its limbs in any wholesome activity. If the teachers of the people really were the wisest and the best and noblest men among us, this and a thousand other blessed things would follow from it; till then let us be content to work and pray, and lay our hand to the wheel wherever we can find a spoke to grasp. *Corruptio optimi est pessima;* the national Church as it ought to be is the soul and conscience of the body politic, but a man whose body has the direction of his conscience we do not commonly consider in the most hopeful moral condition.

THE CAT'S PILGRIMAGE

PART I

"It is all very fine," said the Cat, yawning, and stretching herself against the fender, "but it is rather a bore; I don't see the use of it!" She raised herself, and arranging her tail into a ring, and seating herself in the middle of it, with her forepaws in a straight line from her shoulders, at right angles to the hearth-rug, she looked pensively at the fire. "It is very odd," she went on, "there is my poor Tom; he is gone. I saw him stretched out in the yard. I spoke to him, and he took no notice of me. He won't, I suppose, any more, for they put him under the earth. Nice fellow he was. It is wonderful how little one cares about it. So many jolly evenings we spent together; and now I seem to get on quite as well without him. I wonder what has become of him; and my last children, too, what has become of them? What are we here for? I would ask the men, only they are so conceited and stupid they can't understand what we say. I hear them droning away, teaching their little ones every day; telling them to be good, and to do what they are bid, and all that. Nobody ever tells me to do anything; if they do I don't do it, and I am very good. I wonder whether I should be any better if I minded more. I'll ask the Dog."

"Dog," said she, to a little fat spaniel coiled up on a mat, like a lady's muff with a head and tail stuck on to it, "Dog, what do you make of it all?"

The Dog faintly opened his languid eyes, looked sleepily at the Cat for a moment, and dropped them again.

"Dog," she said, "I want to talk to you; don't go to sleep. Can't you answer a civil question?"

"Don't bother me," said the Dog, "I am tired. I stood on my hind legs ten minutes this morning before I could get my breakfast, and it hasn't agreed with me."

"Who told you to do it?" said the Cat.

"Why, the lady I have to take care of me," replied the Dog.

"Do you feel any better for it, Dog, after you have been standing on your legs?" asked she.

"Hav'n't I told you, you stupid Cat, that it hasn't agreed with me? let me go to sleep and don't plague me."

"But I mean," persisted the Cat, "do you feel improved, as the men call it? They tell their children that if they do what they are told they will improve, and grow good and great. Do you feel good and great?"

"What do I know?" said the Dog. "I eat my breakfast and am happy. Let me alone."

"Do you never think, O Dog without a soul! Do you never wonder what dogs are, and what this world is?"

The Dog stretched himself, and rolled his eyes lazily round the room. "I conceive," he said, "that the world is for dogs, and men and women are put into it to take care of dogs; women to take care of little dogs like me, and men for the big dogs like those in the yard—and cats," he continued, "are to know their place, and not to be troublesome."

"They beat you sometimes," said the Cat. "Why do they do that? They never beat me."

"If they forget their places, and beat me," snarled the Dog, "I bite them, and they don't do it again. I should like to bite you, too, you nasty Cat; you have woke me up."

"There may be truth in what you say," said the Cat, calmly; "but I think your view is limited. If

you listened like me you would hear the men say it was all made for them, and you and I were made to amuse them."

"They don't dare to say so?" said the Dog.

"They do, indeed," said the Cat. "I hear many things which you lose by sleeping so much. They think I am asleep, and so they are not afraid to talk before me; but my ears are open when my eyes are shut."

"You surprise me," said the Dog. "I never listen to them, except when I take notice of them, and then they never talk of anything except of me."

"I could tell you a thing or two about yourself which you don't know," said the Cat. "You have never heard, I dare say, that once upon a time your fathers lived in a temple, and that people prayed to them?"

"Prayed! what is that?"

"Why, they went on their knees to you to ask you to give them good things, just as you stand on your toes to them now to ask for your breakfast. You don't know either that you have got one of those bright things we see up in the air at night called after you?"

"Well, it is just what I said," answered the Dog. "I told you it was all made for us. They never did anything of that sort for you."

"Didn't they? Why, there was a whole city where the people did nothing else, and as soon as we got stiff and couldn't move about any more, instead of being put under the ground like poor Tom, we used to be stuffed full of all sorts of nice things, and kept better than we were when we were alive."

"You are a very wise Cat," answered her companion, "but what good is it knowing all this?"

"Why, don't you see," said she, "they don't do it any more. We are going down in the world, we are, and that is why living on in this way is such an unsatisfactory sort of thing. I don't mean to complain for myself, and you needn't, Dog; we have a quiet life

of it; but a quiet life is not the thing, and if there is nothing to be done except sleep and eat, and eat and sleep, why, as I said before, I don't see the use of it. There is something more in it than that; there was once, and there will be again, and I sha'n't be happy till I find it out. It is a shame, Dog, I say. The men have been here only a few thousand years, and we—why, we have been here hundreds of thousands: if we are older, we ought to be wiser. I'll go and ask the creatures in the wood."

"You'll learn more from the men," said the Dog.

"They are stupid, and they don't know what I say to them; besides, they are so conceited they care for nothing except themselves. No, I shall try what I can do in the woods. I'd as soon go after poor Tom as stay living any longer like this."

"And where is poor Tom?" yawned the Dog.

"That is just one of the things I want to know," answered she. "Poor Tom is lying under the yard, or the skin of him, but whether that is the whole I don't feel so sure. They didn't think so in the city I told you about. It is a beautiful day, Dog; you won't take a trot out with me?" she added wistfully.

"Who? I?" said the Dog. "Not quite."

"You may get so wise," said she.

"Wisdom is good," said the Dog; "but so is the hearth-rug, thank you!"

"But you may be free," said she.

"I shall have to hunt for my own dinner," said he.

"But, Dog, they may pray to you again," said she.

"But I sha'n't have a softer mat to sleep upon, Cat, and as I am rather delicate, that is a consideration."

PART II

So the Dog wouldn't go, and the Cat set off by herself to learn how to be happy, and to be all that a Cat could be. It was a fine sunny morning. She determined to try the meadow first, and, after an hour or two, if she had not succeeded, then to go off to the wood. A blackbird was piping away on a thornbush as if his heart was running over with happiness. The Cat had breakfasted, and so was able to listen without any mixture of feeling. She didn't sneak. She walked boldly up under the bush, and the bird, seeing she had no bad purpose, sat still and sung on.

"Good morning, Blackbird; you seem to be enjoying yourself this fine day."

"Good morning, Cat."

"Blackbird, it is an odd question, perhaps. What ought one to do to be as happy as you?"

"Do your duty, Cat."

"But what is my duty, Blackbird?"

"Take care of your little ones, Cat."

"I hav'n't any," said she.

"Then sing to your mate," said the bird.

"Tom is dead," said she.

"Poor Cat!" said the bird. "Then sing over his grave. If your song is sad, you will find your heart grow lighter for it."

"Mercy!" thought the Cat. "I could do a little singing with a living lover, but I never heard of singing for a dead one. But you see, bird, it isn't cats' nature. When I am cross, I mew. When I am pleased, I purr; but I must be pleased first. I can't purr myself into happiness."

"I am afraid there is something the matter with your heart, my Cat. It wants warming; good-bye."

The Blackbird flew away. The Cat looked sadly after him. "He thinks I am like him; and he doesn't know that a cat is a cat," said she. "As it happens, now, I feel a great deal for a cat. If I hadn't got a heart I shouldn't be unhappy. I won't be angry. I'll try that great fat fellow."

The Ox lay placidly chewing, with content beaming out of his eyes and playing on his mouth.

"Ox," she said, "what is the way to be happy?"

"Do your duty," said the Ox.

"Bother," said the Cat, "duty again! What is it, Ox?"

"Get your dinner," said the Ox.

"But it is got for me, Ox; and I have nothing to do but to eat it."

"Well, eat it, then, like me."

"So I do; but I am not happy for all that."

"Then you are a very wicked, ungrateful Cat."

The Ox munched away. A Bee buzzed into a buttercup under the Cat's nose.

"I beg your pardon," said the Cat, "it isn't curiosity—what are you doing?"

"Doing my duty; don't stop me, Cat."

"But, Bee, what is your duty?"

"Making honey," said the Bee.

"I wish I could make honey," sighed the Cat.

"Do you mean to say you can't?" said the Bee. "How stupid you must be. What do you do, then?"

"I do nothing, Bee. I can't get anything to do."

"You won't get anything to do, you mean, you lazy Cat! You are a good-for-nothing drone. Do you know what we do to our drones? We kill them; and that is all they are fit for. Good morning to you."

"Well, I am sure," said the Cat, "they are treating me civilly! I had better have stopped at home at this rate. Stroke my whiskers! heartless! wicked! good-for-nothing! stupid! and only fit to be killed! This

is a pleasant beginning, anyhow. I must look for some wiser creatures than these are. What shall I do? I know. I know where I will go."

It was in the middle of the wood. The bush was very dark, but she found him by his wonderful eye. Presently, as she got used to the light, she distinguished a sloping roll of feathers, a rounded breast, surmounted by a round head, set close to the body, without an inch of a neck intervening. "How wise he looks!" she said; "what a brain; what a forehead! His head is not long, but what an expanse! and what a depth of earnestness!" The Owl sloped his head a little on one side; the Cat slanted hers upon the other. The Owl set it straight again, the Cat did the same. They stood looking in this way for some minutes; at last, in a whispering voice, the Owl said, "What are you, who presume to look into my repose? Pass on upon your way, and carry elsewhere those prying eyes."

"O wonderful Owl," said the Cat, "you are wise, and I want to be wise; and I am come to you to teach me."

A film floated backwards and forwards over the Owl's eyes; it was his way of showing that he was pleased.

"I have heard in our schoolroom," went on the Cat, "that you sat on the shoulder of Pallas, and she told you all about it."

"And what would you know, O my daughter?" said the Owl.

"Everything," said the Cat, "everything. First of all, how to be happy."

"Mice content you not, my child, even as they content not me," said the Owl. "It is good."

"Mice indeed!" said the Cat; "no, Parlour Cats don't eat mice. I have better than mice, and no trouble to get it; but I want something more."

"The body's meat is provided. You would now fill your soul?"

"I want to improve," said the Cat. "I want something to do. I want to find out what the creatures call my duty."

"You would learn how to employ those happy hours of your leisure?—rather, how to make them happy by a worthy use? Meditate, O Cat! meditate! meditate!"

"That is the very thing," said she. "Meditate! that is what I like above all things. Only I want to know how: I want something to meditate about. Tell me, Owl, and I will bless you every hour of the day as I sit by the parlour fire."

"I will tell you," answered the Owl, "what I have been thinking of ever since the moon changed. You shall take it home with you and think about it too; and the next full moon you shall come again to me: we will compare our conclusions."

"Delightful! delightful!" said the Cat. "What is it? I will try this minute."

"From the beginning," replied the Owl, "our race have been considering which first existed, the Owl or the egg. The Owl comes from the egg, but likewise the egg from the Owl."

"Mercy!" said the Cat.

"From sunrise to sunset I ponder on it, O Cat! When I reflect on the beauty of the complete Owl I think that must have been first as the cause is greater than the effect. When I remember my own childhood I incline the other way."

"Well, but how are we to find out?" said the Cat.

"Find out!" said the Owl. "We can never find out. The beauty of the question is, that its solution is impossible. What would become of all our delightful reasonings, O unwise Cat, if we were so unhappy as to know?"

"But what in the world is the good of thinking about it, if you can't, O Owl?"

"My child, that is a foolish question. It is good

in order that the thoughts on these things may stimulate wonder. It is in wonder that the Owl is great."

"Then you don't know anything at all," said the Cat. "What did you sit on Pallas's shoulder for? You must have gone to sleep."

"Your tone is over-flippant, Cat, for philosophy. The highest of all knowledge is to know that we know nothing."

The Cat made two great arches with her back and her tail.

"Bless the mother that laid you," said she. "You were dropped by mistake in a goose-nest. You won't do. I don't know much, but I am not such a creature as you, anyhow. A great white thing!"

She straightened her body, stuck her tail up on end, and marched off with much dignity. But, though she respected herself rather more than before, she was not on the way to the end of her difficulties. She tried all the creatures she met without advancing a step. They had all the old story, "Do your duty." But each had its own, and no one could tell her what hers was. Only one point they all agreed upon—the duty of getting their dinner when they were hungry. The day wore on, and she began to think she would like hers. Her meals came so regularly at home that she scarcely knew what hunger was; but now the sensation came over her very palpably, and she experienced quite new emotions as the hares and rabbits skipped about her, or as she spied a bird upon a tree. For a moment she thought she would go back and eat the Owl—he was the most useless creature she had seen; but on second thoughts she didn't fancy he would be nice; besides that, his claws were sharp and his beak too. Presently, however, as she sauntered down the path, she came on a little open patch of green, in the middle of which a fine fat Rabbit was sitting. There was no escape. The path ended there, and the bushes were so thick

on each side that he couldn't get away except through her paws.

"Really," said the Cat, "I don't wish to be troublesome; I wouldn't do it if I could help it; but I am very hungry; I am afraid I must eat you. It is very unpleasant, I assure you, to me as well as to you."

The poor Rabbit begged for mercy.

"Well," said she, "I think it is hard; I do really—and, if the law could be altered, I should be the first to welcome it. But what can a cat do? You eat the grass; I eat you. But, Rabbit, I wish you would do me a favour."

"Anything to save my life," said the Rabbit.

"It is not exactly that," said the Cat; "but I haven't been used to killing my own food, and it is disagreeable. Couldn't you die? I shall hurt you dreadfully if I kill you."

"Oh!" said the Rabbit, "you are a kind Cat; I see it in your eyes, and your whiskers don't curl like those of the cats in the woods. I am sure you will spare me."

"But, Rabbit, it is a question of principle. I have to do my duty; and the only duty I have, as far as I can make out, is to get my dinner."

"If you kill me, Cat, to do your duty, I sha'n't be able to do mine."

It was a doubtful point, and the Cat was new to casuistry. "What is your duty?" said she.

"I have seven little ones at home—seven little ones, and they will all die without me. Pray let me go."

"What! do you take care of your children?" said the Cat. "How interesting! I should like to see that; take me."

"Oh! you would eat them, you would," said the Rabbit. "No! better eat me than them. No, no."

"Well, well," said the Cat, "I don't know; I suppose I couldn't answer for myself. I don't think I am right, for duty is pleasant, and it is very unpleasant to

be so hungry; but I suppose you must go. You seem a good Rabbit. Are you happy, Rabbit?"

"Happy! oh, dear beautiful Cat! if you spare me to my poor babies!"

"Pooh, pooh!" said the Cat, peevishly; "I don't want fine speeches; I meant whether you thought it worth while to be alive? Of course you do! It don't matter. Go, and keep out of my way; for, if I don't find something to eat, you may not get off another time. Get along, Rabbit."

PART III

It was a great day in the Fox's cave. The eldest cub had the night before brought home his first goose, and they were just sitting down to it as the Cat came by.

"Ah, my young lady! what, you in the woods? Bad feeding at home, eh? Come out to hunt for yourself?"

The goose smelt excellent; the Cat couldn't help a wistful look. She was only come, she said, to pay her respects to her wild friends.

"Just in time," said the Fox. "Sit down and take a bit of meat; I see you want it. Make room, you cubs; place a seat for the lady."

"Why, thank you," said the Cat, "yes; I acknowledge it is not unwelcome. Pray, don't disturb yourselves, young Foxes. I am hungry. I met a rabbit on my way here. I was going to eat him, but he talked so prettily I let him go."

The cubs looked up from their plates, and burst out laughing.

"For shame, young rascals," said their father. "Where are your manners? Mind your business, and don't be rude."

"Fox," she said, when it was over, and the cubs were gone to play, "you are very clever. The other creatures

are all stupid." The Fox bowed. "Your family were always clever," she continued. "I have heard about them in the books they use in our schoolroom. It is many years since your ancestor stole the crow's dinner."

"Don't say stole, Cat; it is not pretty. Obtained by superior ability."

"I beg your pardon," said the Cat; "it is all living with those men. That is not the point. Well, but I want to know whether you are any wiser or any better than Foxes were then?"

"Really," said the Fox, "I am what Nature made me. I don't know. I am proud of my ancestors, and do my best to keep up the credit of the family."

"Well, but, Fox, I mean, do you improve? do I? do any of you? The men are always talking about doing their duty, and that, they say, is the way to improve, and to be happy. And as I was not happy I thought that had, perhaps, something to do with it, so I came out to talk to the creatures. They also had the old chant—duty, duty, duty; but none of them could tell me what mine was, or whether I had any."

The Fox smiled. "Another leaf out of your schoolroom," said he. "Can't they tell you there?"

"Indeed," she said, "they are very absurd. They say a great deal about themselves, but they only speak disrespectfully of us. If such creatures as they can do their duty, and improve, and be happy, why can't we?"

"They say they do, do they?" said the Fox. "What do they say of me?"

The Cat hesitated.

"Don't be afraid of hurting my feelings, Cat. Out with it."

"They do all justice to your abilities, Fox," said she; "but your morality, they say, is not high. They say you are a rogue."

"Morality!" said the Fox. "Very moral and good

they are. And you really believe all that? What do they mean by calling me a rogue? "

"They mean, you take whatever you can get, without caring whether it is just or not."

"My dear Cat, it is very well for a man, if he can't bear his own face, to paint a pretty one on a panel and call it a looking-glass; but you don't mean that it takes *you* in? "

"Teach me," said the Cat. "I fear I am weak."

"Who get justice from the men unless they can force it? Ask the sheep that are cut into mutton. Ask the horses that draw their ploughs. I don't mean it is wrong of the men to do as they do; but they needn't lie about it."

"You surprise me," said the Cat.

"My good Cat, there is but one law in the world. The weakest goes to the wall. The men are sharper-witted than the creatures, and so they get the better of them and use them. They may call it just, if they like; but when a tiger eats a man I guess he has just as much justice on his side as the man when he eats a sheep."

"And that is the whole of it," said the Cat. "Well, it is very sad. What do you do with yourself? "

"My duty, to be sure," said the Fox; "use my wits and enjoy myself. My dear friend, you and I are on the lucky side. We eat and are not eaten."

"Except by the hounds now and then," said the Cat.

"Yes; by brutes that forget their nature, and sell their freedom to the men," said the Fox, bitterly. "In the meantime my wits have kept my skin whole hitherto, and I bless Nature for making me a Fox and not a goose."

"And are you happy, Fox? "

"Happy! yes, of course. So would you be if you would do like me, and use your wits. My good Cat, I should be as miserable as you if I found my geese every day at the cave's mouth. I have to hunt for them, lie

for them, sneak for them, fight for them; cheat those old fat farmers, and bring out what there is inside me; and then I am happy—of course I am. And then, Cat, think of my feelings as a father last night, when my dear boy came home with the very young gosling which was marked for the Michaelmas dinner! Old Reineke himself wasn't more than a match for that young Fox at his years. You know our epic? "

"A little of it, Fox. They don't read it in our school-room. They say it is not moral; but I have heard pieces of it. I hope it is not all quite true."

"Pack of stuff! it is the only true book that ever was written. If it is not, it ought to be. Why, that book is the law of the world—*la carrière aux talents*—and writing it was the honestest thing ever done by a man. That fellow knew a thing or two, and wasn't ashamed of himself when he did know. They are all like him, too, if they would only say so. There never was one of them yet who wasn't more ashamed of being called ugly than of being called a rogue, and of being called stupid than of being called naughty."

"It has a roughish end, this life of yours, if you keep clear of the hounds, Fox," said the Cat.

"What! a rope in the yard? Well, it must end some day; and when the farmer catches me I shall be getting old, and my brains will be taking leave of me; so the sooner I go the better, that I may disgrace myself the less. Better be jolly while it lasts, than sit mewing out your life and grumbling at it as a bore."

"Well," said the Cat, "I am very much obliged to you. I suppose I may even get home again. I shall not find a wiser friend than you, and perhaps I shall not find another good-natured enough to entertain me so handsomely. But it is very sad."

"Think of what I have said," answered the Fox. "I'll call at your house some night; you will take me a walk round the yard, and then I'll show you."

"Not quite," thought the Cat, as she trotted off. "One good turn deserves another, that is true; and you have given me a dinner. But they have given me many at home, and I mean to take a few more of them; so I think you mustn't go round our yard."

PART IV

THE next morning, when the Dog came down to breakfast, he found his old friend sitting in her usual place on the hearth-rug.

"Oh! so you have come back?" said he. "How d'ye do? You don't look as if you had had a very pleasant journey."

"I have learnt something," said the Cat. "Knowledge is never pleasant."

"Then it is better to be without it," said the Dog.

"Especially better to be without knowing how to stand on one's hind legs, Dog," said the Cat; "still, you see, you are proud of it; but I have learnt a great deal, Dog. They won't worship you any more, and it is better for you; you wouldn't be any happier. What did you do yesterday?"

"Indeed," said the Dog, "I hardly remember. I slept after you went away. In the afternoon I took a drive in the carriage. Then I had my dinner. My maid washed me and put me to bed. There is the difference between you and me; you have to wash yourself and put yourself to bed."

"And you really don't find it a bore, living like this? Wouldn't you like something to do? Wouldn't you like some children to play with? The Fox seemed to find it very pleasant."

"Children, indeed!" said the Dog, "when I have got men and women. Children are well enough for foxes and wild creatures; refined dogs know better;

and, for doing—can't I stand on my toes? can't I dance? at least, couldn't I before I was so fat?"

"Ah! I see everybody likes what he was bred to," sighed the Cat. "I was bred to do nothing, and I must like that. Train the cat as the cat should go, and the cat will be happy and ask no questions. Never seek for impossibilities, Dog. That is the secret."

"And you have spent a day in the woods to learn that?" said he. "I could have taught you that. Why, Cat, one day when you were sitting scratching your nose before the fire, I thought you looked so pretty that I should have liked to marry you; but I knew I couldn't, so I didn't make myself miserable."

The Cat looked at him with her odd green eyes. "I never wished to marry you, Dog; I shouldn't have presumed. But it was wise of you not to fret about it. Listen to me, Dog—listen. I met many creatures in the wood, all sorts of creatures, beasts and birds. They were all happy; they didn't find it a bore. They went about their work, and did it, and enjoyed it, and yet none of them had the same story to tell. Some did one thing, some another; and, except the Fox, each had got a sort of notion of doing its duty. The Fox was a rogue; he said he was; but yet he was not unhappy. His conscience never troubled him. Your work is standing on your toes, and you are happy. I have none, and this is why I am unhappy. When I came to think about it, I found every creature out in the wood had to get its own living. I tried to get mine, but I didn't like it, because I wasn't used to it; and as for knowing, the Fox, who didn't care to know anything except how to cheat greater fools than himself, was the cleverest fellow I came across. Oh! the Owl, Dog—you should have heard the Owl. But I came to this, that it was no use trying to know, and the only way to be jolly was to go about one's own business like a decent Cat. Cats' business seems to be killing rabbits

and such-like; and it is not the pleasantest possible; so the sooner one is bred to it the better. As for me, that have been bred to do nothing, why, as I said before I must try to like that; but I consider myself an unfortunate Cat."

"So don't I consider myself an unfortunate Dog," said her companion.

"Very likely you do not," said the Cat.

By this time their breakfast was come in. The Cat ate hers, the Dog did penance for his; and if one might judge by the purring on the hearth-rug, the Cat, if not the happiest of the two, at least was not exceedingly miserable.

FABLES AND PARABLES

I. THE LIONS AND THE OXEN

Once upon a time a number of cattle came out of the desert to settle in the broad meadows by a river. They were poor and wretched, and they found it a pleasant exchange; except for a number of lions, who lived in the mountains near, and who claimed a right, in consideration of permitting the cattle to remain, to eat as many as they wanted among them. The cattle submitted, partly because they were too weak to help it, partly because the lions said it was the will of Jupiter; and the cattle believed them. And so they went on for many ages, till at last, from better feeding, the cattle grew larger and stronger, and multiplied into great numbers; and at the same time, from other causes, the lions had much diminished; they were fewer, smaller, and meaner-looking than they had been; and, except in their own opinion of themselves, and in their appetites, which were more enormous than ever, there was nothing of the old lion left in them.

One day a large Ox was quietly grazing, when one of these lions came up, and desired the Ox to lie down, for he wanted to eat him. The Ox raised his head, and bravely protested; the Lion growled; the Ox was mild but firm. The Lion insisted upon his legal right, and they agreed to refer the matter to Minos.

When they came into court, the Lion accused the Ox of having broken the laws of the beasts. The Lion was king, and the others were bound to obey. Prescriptive usage was clearly on the Lion's side. Minos called on the Ox for his defence.

The Ox said that, without consent of his own being asked, he had been born into the meadow. He did not consider himself much of a beast, but, such as he was, he was very happy, and gave Jupiter thanks. Now, if the Lion could show that the existence of lions was of more importance than that of oxen in the eyes of Jupiter, he had nothing more to say, he was ready to sacrifice himself. But this Lion had already eaten a thousand oxen. Lions' appetites were so insatiable that he was forced to ask whether they were really worth what was done for them,—whether the life of one lion was so noble that the lives of thousands of oxen were not equal to it? He was ready to own that lions had always eaten oxen, but lions when they first came to the meadow were a different sort of creature, and they themselves, too (and the Ox looked complacently at himself), had improved since that time. Judging by appearances, though they might be fallacious, he himself was quite as good a beast as the Lion. If the lions would lead lives more noble than oxen could live, once more he would not complain. As it was, he submitted that the cost was too great.

Then the Lion put on a grand face and tried to roar; but when he opened his mouth he disclosed a jaw so drearily furnished that Minos laughed, and told the Ox it was his own fault if he let himself be eaten by such a beast as that. If he persisted in declining, he did not think the Lion would force him.

II. THE FARMER AND THE FOX

A Farmer, whose poultry-yard had suffered severely from the foxes, succeeded at last in catching one in a trap. "Ah, you rascal!" said he, as he saw him struggling, "I'll teach you to steal my fat geese!—you shall hang on the tree yonder, and your brothers shall

see what comes of thieving!" The Farmer was twisting a halter to do what he threatened, when the Fox, whose tongue had helped him in hard pinches before, thought there could be no harm in trying whether it might not do him one more good turn.

"You will hang me," he said, "to frighten my brother foxes. On the word of a fox they won't care a rabbit-skin for it; they'll come and look at me; but you may depend upon it, they will dine at your expense before they go home again!"

"Then I shall hang you for yourself, as a rogue and a rascal," said the Farmer.

"I am only what Nature, or whatever you call the thing, chose to make me," the Fox answered. "I didn't make myself."

"You stole my geese," said the man.

"Why did Nature make me like geese, then?" said the Fox. "Live and let live; give me my share, and I won't touch yours; but you keep them all to yourself."

"I don't understand your fine talk," answered the Farmer; "but I know that you are a thief, and that you deserve to be hanged."

His head is too thick to let me catch him so, thought the Fox; I wonder if his heart is any softer! "You are taking away the life of a fellow-creature," he said; that's a responsibility—it is a curious thing, that life, and who knows what comes after it? You say I am a rogue—I say I am not; but at any rate I ought not to be hanged—for if I am not, I don't deserve it; and if I am, you should give me time to repent!" I have him now, thought the Fox; let him get out if he can.

"Why, what would you have me do with you?" said the man.

"My notion is that you should let me go, and give me a lamb, or goose or two, every month, and then I could live without stealing: but perhaps you know better than me, and I am a rogue; my education may

have been neglected; you should shut me up, and take care of me, and teach me. Who knows but in the end I may turn into a dog?"

"Very pretty," said the Farmer; "we have dogs enough, and more, too, than we can take care of, without you. No, no, Master Fox, I have caught you, and you shall swing, whatever is the logic of it. There will be one rogue less in the world, anyhow."

"It is mere hate and unchristian vengeance," said the Fox.

"No, friend," the Farmer answered, "I don't hate you, and I don't want to revenge myself on you; but you and I can't get on together, and I think I am of more importance than you. If nettles and thistles grow in my cabbage-garden, I don't try to persuade them to grow into cabbages; I just dig them up. I don't hate them; but I feel somehow that they mustn't hinder me with my cabbages, and that I must put them away and so, my poor friend, I am sorry for you, but I am afraid you must swing."

III. PARABLE OF THE BREAD-FRUIT TREE

It was after one of those heavy convulsions which have divided era from era, and left mankind to start again from the beginning, that a number of brave men gathered together to raise anew from the ground a fresh green home for themselves. The rest of the surviving race were sheltering themselves amidst the old ruins, or in the caves on the mountains, feeding on husks and shells; but these men with clear heads and brave hearts ploughed and harrowed the earth, and planted seeds and watered them, and watched them; and the seed grew and shot up with the spring, but one was larger and fairer than the rest, and the other plants seemed to know it, for they crawled along till they reached the

large one; and they gathered round it; and clung to it and grew into it; and soon they became one great stem, with branching roots feeding it as from many fountains. Then the men got great heart in them when they saw that, and they laboured more bravely, digging about it in the hot sun, till at last it became great and mighty, and its roots went down into the heart of the earth, and its branches stretched over all the plain.

Then many others of mankind, when they saw the tree was beautiful, came down and gathered under it, and those who had raised it received them with open arms, and they all sat under its shade together, and gathered its fruits, and made their homes there, rejoicing in its loveliness. And ages passed away, and all that generation passed away, and still the tree grew stronger and fairer, and their children's children watched it age after age, as it lived on and flowered and seeded. And they said in their hearts, the tree is immortal—it will never die. They took no care of the seed; the scent of the flowers and the taste of the sweet fruit was all they thought of: and the winds of heaven, and the wild birds, and the beasts of the field caught the stray fruits and seed-dust, and bore the seed away, and scattered it in far-off soils.

And by-and-by, at a great great age, the tree at last began to cease to grow, and then to faint and droop: its leaves were not so thick, its flowers were not so fragrant; and from time to time the night winds, which before had passed away, and had been never heard, came moaning and sighing among the branches. And the men for a while doubted and denied—they thought it was the accident of the seasons; and then a branch fell, and they said it was a storm, and such a storm as came but once in a thousand years. At last there could be no doubt that the leaves were thin and sere and scanty —that the sun shone through them—that the fruit was tasteless. But the generation was gone away which

had known the tree in its beauty, and so men said it was always so—its fruits were never better—its foliage never was thicker.

So things went on, and from time to time strangers would come among them, and would say, Why are you sitting here under the old tree? there are young trees grown of the seed of this tree, far away, more beautiful than it ever was; see, we have brought you leaves and flowers to show you. But the men would not listen. They were angry, and some they drove away, and some they killed, and poured their blood round the roots of the tree, saying, They have spoken evil of our tree; let them feed it now with their blood. At last some of their own wiser ones brought out specimens of the old fruits, which had been laid up to be preserved, and compared them with the present bearing, and they saw that the tree was not as it had been; and such of them as were good men reproached themselves, and said it was their own fault. They had not watered it; they had forgotten to manure it. So, like their first fathers, they laboured with might and main, and for a while it seemed as if they might succeed, and for a few years branches, which were almost dead, when the spring came round put out some young green shoots again. But it was only for a few years; there was not enough of living energy in the tree. Half the labour which was wasted on it would have raised another nobler one far away. So the men grew soon weary, and looked for a shorter way; and some gathered up the leaves and shoots which the strangers had brought, and grafted them on, if perhaps they might grow; but they could not grow on a dying stock, and they, too, soon dropped and became as the rest. And others said, Come, let us tie the preserved fruits on again; perhaps they will join again to the stem, and give it back its life. But there were not enough, for only a few had been preserved; so they took painted paper and wax and clay, and cut sham

leaves and fruits of the old pattern, which for a time looked bright and gay, and the world, who did not know what had been done, said—See, the tree is immortal: it is green again. Then some believed, but many saw that it was a sham, and liking better to bear the sky and sun, without any shade at all, than to live in a lie, and call painted paper leaves and flowers, they passed out in search of other homes. But the larger number stayed behind; they had lived so long in falsehood that they had forgotten there was any such thing as truth at all; the tree had done very well for them—it would do very well for their children. And if their children, as they grew up, did now and then happen to open their eyes and see how it really was, they learned from their fathers to hold their tongues about it. If the little ones and the weak ones believed, it answered all purposes, and change was inconvenient. They might smile to themselves at the folly which they countenanced, but they were discreet, and they would not expose it. This is the state of the tree, and of the men who are under it, at this present time:—they say it still does very well. Perhaps it does—but, stem and boughs and paper leaves, it is dry for the burning, and if the lightning touches it, those who sit beneath will suffer.

SIR HUGH DE AVALON

To the sceptical student of the nineteenth century the ecclesiastical biographies of mediæval Europe are for the most part unprofitable studies. The writers of them were generally monks. The object for which they were composed was either the edification of the brethren of the convent, or the glorifying of its founder or benefactor. The Holy See in considering a claim to canonisation disregarded the ordinary details of character and conduct. It dwelt exclusively on the exceptional and the wonderful, and the noblest of lives possessed but little interest for it unless accompanied by evidences or miracles, performed directly by the candidate while on earth or by his relics after his departure. Instead of pictures of real men the biographers present us with glorified images of what, in their opinion, the Church heroes ought to have been. St. Cuthbert becomes as legendary as Theseus, and the authentic figure is swathed in an embroidered envelope of legends through which usually no trace of the genuine lineaments is allowed to penetrate.

It happens however, occasionally, that in the midst of the imaginative rubbish which has thus come down to us, we encounter something of a character entirely different. We find ourselves in the hands of writers who themselves saw what they describe, who knew as well as we know the distinction between truth and falsehood, and who could notice and appreciate genuine human qualities. Amidst the obscure forms of mediæval history we are brought face to face with authentic flesh and blood, and we are able to see in clear sunlight the sort of person who, in those ages, was considered

specially admirable, and, alive or dead, was held up to
ne reverence of mankind. To one of these I propose in
ne present article to draw some brief attention. It is
ne life of St. Hugo of Avalon, a monk of the Grand
hartreuse, who was invited by Henry II. into England,
ecame Bishop of Lincoln, and was the designer, and
part builder, of Lincoln Cathedral. The biographer
as his chaplain and constant companion — Brother
dam—a monk like himself, though of another order,
ho became afterwards Abbot of Ensham; and having
arnt, perhaps from the Bishop himself, the detestable-
ss of lying, has executed his task with simple and
rupulous fidelity. The readers whose interests he was
nsidering were, as usual, the inmates of convents.
e omits, as he himself tells us, many of the outer and
ore secular incidents of the Bishop's life, as unsuited
his audience. We have glimpses of kings, courts,
d great councils, with other high matters of national
oment. The years which the Bishop spent in England
ere rich in events. There was the conquest of Ireland;
ere were Welsh and French wars; the long struggle
Henry II. and his sons; and, when Henry passed
ay, there was the Grand Crusade. Then followed
e captivity of Cœur de Lion and the treachery of
hn; and Hugo's work, it is easy to see, was not
nfined to the management of his diocese. On all
is, however, Abbot Adam observes entire silence, not
nsidering our curiosity, but the concerns of the souls
his own monks, whom he would not distract by too
ely representations of the world which they had
andoned.

The book however, as it stands, is so rare a treasure
at we will waste no time in describing what it is not.
ithin its own compass it contains the most vivid
ture which has come down to us of England as it
en was, and of the first Plantagenet kings.

Bishop Hugo came into the world in the mountainous

country near Grenoble, on the borders of Savoy. Abbot Adam dwells with a certain pride upon his patron's parentage. He tells us indeed, sententiously, that it is better to be noble in morals than to be noble in blood—that to be born undistinguished is a less misfortune than to live so—but he regards a noble family only as an honourable setting for a nature which was noble in itself. The Bishop was one of three children of a Lord of Avalon, and was born in a castle near Pontcharra. His mother died when he was eight years old; and his father having lost the chief interest which bound him to life, divided his estates between his two other sons, and withdrew with the little one into an adjoining monastery. There was a college attached to it, where the children of many of the neighbouring barons were educated. Hugo, however, was from the first designed for a religious life, and mixed little with the other boys. "You, my little fellow," his tutor said to him, "I am bringing up for Christ: you must not learn to play or trifle." The old Lord became a monk. Hugo grew up beside him in the convent, waiting on him as he became infirm, and smoothing the downward road; and meanwhile learning whatever of knowledge and practical piety his preceptors were able to provide. The life, it is likely, was not wanting in austerity, but the comparatively easy rule did not satisfy Hugo's aspirations. The theory of "religion," as the conventual system in all its forms was termed, was the conquest of self, the reduction of the entire nature to the control of the better part of it; and as the seat of self lay in the body, as temptation to do wrong, then as always, lay, directly or indirectly, in the desire for some bodily indulgence, or the dread of some bodily pain, the method pursued was the inuring of the body to the hardest fare, and the producing indifference to cold, hunger, pain, or any other calamity which the chances of life could inflict upon it. Men so trained could play their part in life,

whether high or low, with wonderful advantage. Wealth had no attraction for them. The world could give them nothing which they had learnt to desire, and take nothing from them which they cared to lose. The orders, however, differed in severity; and at this time the highest discipline, moral and bodily, was to be found only among the Carthusians. An incidental visit with the prior of his own convent to the Grande Chartreuse, determined Hugo to seek admission into this extraordinary society.

It was no light thing which he was undertaking. The majestic situation of the Grande Chartreuse itself, the loneliness, the seclusion, the atmosphere of sanctity, which hung around it, the mysterious beings who had made their home there, fascinated his imagination. A stern old monk, to whom he first communicated his intention, supposing that he was led away by a passing fancy, looked grimly at his pale face and delicate limbs, and roughly told him that he was a fool. "Young man," the monk said to him, "the men who inhabit these rocks are hard as the rocks themselves. They have no mercy on their own bodies and none on others. The dress will scrape the flesh from your bones. The discipline will tear the bones themselves out of such frail limbs as yours."

The Carthusians combined in themselves the severities of the hermits and of the regular orders. Each member of the fraternity lived in his solitary cell in the rock, meeting his companions only in the chapel, or for instruction, or for the business of the house. They ate no meat. A loaf of bread was given to every brother on Sunday morning at the refectory door, which was to last him through the week. An occasional mess of gruel was all that was allowed in addition. His bedding was a horse-cloth, a pillow, and a skin. His dress was a horsehair shirt, covered *outside* with linen, which was worn night and day, and the white cloak of the order,

generally a sheepskin, and unlined—all else was bare. He was bound by vows of the strictest obedience. The order had business in all parts of the world. Now some captive was to be rescued from the Moors; now some earl or king had been treading on the Church's privileges; a brother was chosen to interpose in the name of the Chartreuse: he received his credentials and had to depart on the instant, with no furniture but his stick, to walk, it might be, to the furthest corner of Europe.

A singular instance of the kind occurs incidentally in the present narrative. A certain brother Einard, who came ultimately to England, had been sent to Spain, to Granada, to Africa itself. Returning through Provence he fell in with some of the Albigenses, who spoke slightingly of the sacraments. The hard Carthusian saw but one course to follow with men he deemed rebels to his Lord. He was the first to urge the crusade which ended in their destruction. He roused the nearest orthodox nobles to arms, and Hugo's biographer tells delightedly how the first invasions were followed by others on a larger scale, and "the brute and pestilent race, unworthy of the name of men, were cut away by the toil of the faithful, and by God's mercy destroyed.

"Pitiless to themselves," as the old monk said, "they had no pity on any other man," as Einard afterwards was himself to feel. Even Hugo at times disapproved of their extreme severity. "God," he said, alluding to some cruel action of the society, "God tempers his anger with compassion. When he drove Adam from Paradise, he at least gave him a coat of skins: man knows not what mercy means."

Einard, after this Albigensian affair, was ordered in the midst of a bitter winter to repair to Denmark. He was a very aged man—a hundred years old, his brother monks believed—broken at any rate with age and toil. He shrank from the journey, he begged to be spared, and

when the command was persisted in, he refused obedience. He was instantly expelled. Half-clad, amidst the ice and snow, he wandered from one religious house to another. In all he was refused admission. At last, one bitter frosty night he appeared penitent at the gate of the Chartreuse, and prayed to be forgiven. The porter was forbidden to open to him till morning, but left the old man to shiver in the snow through the darkness.

"By my troth, brother," Einard said the next day to him, "had you been a bean last night, between my teeth, they would have chopped you in pieces in spite of me."

Such were the monks of the Chartreuse, among whom the son of the Avalon noble desired to be enrolled, as the highest favour which could be shown him upon earth. His petition was entertained. He was allowed to enlist in the spiritual army, in which he rapidly distinguished himself; and at the end of twenty years he had acquired a name through France as the ablest member of the world-famed fraternity.

It was at this time, somewhere about 1174, that Henry II. conceived the notion of introducing the Carthusians into England. In the premature struggle to which he had committed himself with the Church, he had been hopelessly worsted. The Constitutions of Clarendon had been torn in pieces. He had himself, of his own accord, done penance at the shrine of the murdered Becket. The haughty sovereign of England, as a symbol of the sincerity of his submission, had knelt in the Chapter-house of Canterbury, presenting voluntarily there his bare shoulders to be flogged by the monks. His humiliation, so far from degrading him, had restored him to the affection of his subjects, and his endeavour thenceforward was to purify and reinvigorate the proud institution against which he had too rashly matched his strength.

In pursuance of his policy he had applied to the Chartreuse for assistance, and half a dozen monks, among them brother Einard, whose Denmark mission was exchanged for the English, had been sent over and established at Witham, a village not far from Frome in Somersetshire. Sufficient pains had not been taken to prepare for their reception. The Carthusians were a solitary order and required exclusive possession of the estates set apart for their use. The Saxon population were still in occupation of their holdings, and being Crown tenants, saw themselves threatened with eviction in favour of foreigners. Quarrels had arisen and ill-feeling, and the Carthusians, proud as the proudest of nobles, and considering that in coming to England they were rather conferring favours than receiving them, resented the being compelled to struggle for tenements which they had not sought or desired. The first prior threw up his office and returned to the Chartreuse. The second died immediately after of chagrin and disgust; and the King, who was then in Normandy, heard to his extreme mortification that the remaining brethren were threatening to take staff in hand and march back to their homes. The Count de Maurienne to whom he communicated his distress mentioned Hugo's name to him. It was determined to send for Hugo, and Fitzjocelyn, Bishop of Bath, with other venerable persons carried the invitation to the Chartreuse.

To Hugo himself, meanwhile, as if in preparation for the destiny which was before him, a singular experience was at that moment occurring. He was now about forty years old. It is needless to say that he had duly practised the usual austerities prescribed by his rule. Whatever discipline could do to kill the carnal nature in him had been carried out to its utmost harshness. He was a man, however, of great physical strength. His flesh was not entirely dead, and he was going where superiority to worldly temptation would

be specially required. Just before Fitzjocelyn arrived he was assailed suddenly by emotions so extremely violent that he said he would rather face the pains of Gehenna than encounter them again. His mind was unaffected, but the devil had him at advantage in his sleep. He prayed, he flogged himself, he fasted, he confessed; still Satan was allowed to buffet him, and though he had no fear for his soul, he thought his body would die in the struggle. One night in particular the agony reached its crisis. He lay tossing on his uneasy pallet, the angel of darkness trying with all his allurements to tempt his conscience into acquiescence in evil. An angel from above appeared to enter the cell as a spectator of the conflict. Hugo imagined that he sprung to him, clutched him, and wrestled like Jacob with him to extort a blessing, but could not succeed, and at last he sank exhausted on the ground. In the sleep or the unconsciousness which followed, an aged prior of the Chartreuse who had admitted him as a boy to the order, had died and had since been canonised, seemed to lean over him as he lay and inquired the cause of his distress. He said that he was afflicted to agony by the law of sin that was in his members, and unless some one aided him he would perish. The saint drew from his breast what appeared to be a knife, opened his body, drew a fiery mass of something from the bowels, and flung it out of the door. He awoke and found that it was morning and that he was perfectly cured.

"Did you never feel a return of these motions of the flesh?" asked Adam, when Hugo related the story to him.

"Not never," Hugo answered, "but never to a degree that gave me the slightest trouble."

"I have been particular," wrote Adam afterwards, "to relate this exactly as it happened, a false account of it having gone abroad that it was the Blessed Virgin who appeared instead of the prior," and that

Hugo was relieved by an operation of a less honourable kind.

Visionary nonsense the impatient reader may say; and had Hugo become a dreamer of the cloister, a persecutor like St. Dominic, or a hysterical fanatic like Ignatius Loyola, we might pass by it as a morbid illusion. But there never lived a man to whom the word morbid could be applied with less propriety. In the Hugo of Avalon with whom we are now to become acquainted, we shall see nothing but the sunniest cheerfulness, strong masculine sense, inflexible purpose, uprightness in word and deed; with an ever-flowing stream of genial and buoyant humour.

In the story of the temptation, therefore, we do but see the final conquest of the selfish nature in him, which left his nobler qualities free to act, wherever he might find himself.

Fitzjocelyn anticipating difficulty had brought with him the Bishop of Grenoble to support his petition. He was received at first with universal clamour. Hugo was the brightest jewel of the order; Hugo could not be parted with for any prince on earth. He himself, entirely happy where he was, anticipated nothing but trouble, but left his superiors to decide for him. At length sense of duty prevailed. The brethren felt that he was a shining light, of which the world must not be deprived. The Bishop of Grenoble reminded them that Christ had left heaven and come to earth for sinners' souls, and that his example ought to be imitated. It was arranged that Hugo was to go, and a few weeks later he was at Witham.

He was welcomed there as an angel from heaven. He found everything in confusion, the few monks living in wattled huts in the forest, the village still in possession of its old occupants, and bad blood and discontent on all hands. The first difficulty was to enter upon the lands without wrong to the people, and the history of

a large eviction in the twelfth century will not be without its instructiveness even at the present day. One thing Hugo was at once decided upon, that the foundation would not flourish if it was built upon injustice. He repaired to Henry, and as a first step induced him to offer the tenants (Crown serfs or villeins) either entire enfranchisements or farms of equal value, or any other of the royal manors, to be selected by themselves. Some chose one, some the other. The next thing was compensation for improvements, houses, farm-buildings, and fences erected by the people at their own expense. The Crown, if it resumed possession, must pay for these or wrong would be done. "Unless your Majesty satisfy these poor men to the last obol," said Hugo to Henry, "we cannot take possession."

The King consented, and the people, when the Prior carried back the news of the arrangement, were satisfied to go.

But this was not all. Many of them were removing to great distance, and could carry with them the materials of their houses. Hugo resolved that they should keep these things, and again marched off to the court.

"My Lord," said Hugo, "I am but a new comer in your realm, and I have already enriched your Majesty with a quantity of cottages and farm-steadings."

"Riches I could well have spared," said Henry, laughing. "You have almost made a beggar of me. What am I to do with old huts and rotten timber?"

"Perhaps your Majesty will give them to me," said Hugo. "It is but a trifle," he added, when the King hesitated. "It is my first request, and only a small one."

"This is a terrible fellow that we have brought among us," laughed the King; "if he is so powerful with his persuasions, what will he do if he tries force? Let it be as he says. We must not drive him to extremities."

Thus, with the good will of all parties, and no wrong done to any man, the first obstacles were overcome. The villagers went away happy. The monks entered upon their lands amidst prayers and blessings, the King himself being as pleased as any one at his first experience of the character of Prior Hugo.

Henry had soon occasion to see more of him. He had promised to build the monks a house and chapel, but between Ireland, and Wales, and Scotland, and his dominions in France, and his three mutinous sons, he had many troubles on his hands. Time passed and the building was not begun, and Hugo's flock grew mutinous once more; twice he sent Henry a reminder, twice came back fair words and nothing more. The brethren began to hint that the Prior was afraid of the powers of this world, and dared not speak plainly; and one of them, Brother Gerard, an old monk with high blood in his veins, declared that he would himself go and tell Henry some unpleasant truths. Hugo had discovered in his interviews with him that the King was no ordinary man, "vir sagacis ingenii, et inscrutabilis fere animi." He made no opposition, but he proposed to go himself along with this passionate gentleman, and he, Gerard, and the aged Einard, who was mentioned above, went together as a deputation.

The King received them as "cœlestes angelos,"—angels from heaven. He professed the deepest reverence for their characters, and the greatest anxiety to please them, but he said nothing precise and determined, and the fiery Gerard burst out as he intended. Carthusian monks, it seems, considered themselves entitled to speak to kings on entirely equal terms. "Finish your work or leave it, my Lord King," the proud Burgundian said. "It shall no more be any concern to me. You have a pleasant realm here in England, but for myself I prefer to take my leave of you and go back to my desert Chartreuse. You give us bread,

nd you think you are doing a great thing for us. Ve do not need your bread. It is better for us to eturn to our Alps. You count money lost which you pend on your soul's health; keep it then, since you ove it so dearly. Or rather, you cannot keep it; for ou must die and let it go to others who will not hank you."

Hugo tried to check the stream of words, but Gerard nd Einard were both older than he, and refused to be estrained.

"Regem videres philosophantem:" the King was pparently meditating. His face did not alter, nor did e speak a word till the Carthusian had done.

"And what do you think, my good fellow," he said t last, after a pause, looking up and turning to Hugo: will you forsake me too?"

"My Lord," said Hugo, "I am less desperate than ıy brothers. You have much work upon your hands, nd I can feel for you. When God shall please you ill have leisure to attend to us."

"By my soul," Henry answered, "you are one that I ill never part with while I live."

He sent workmen at once to Witham. Cells and apel were duly built. The trouble finally passed way, and the Carthusian priory taking root became ıe English nursery of the order, which rapidly spread.

Hugo himself continued there for eleven years, aving it from time to time on business of the Church, r summoned, as happened more and more frequently,) Henry's presence. The King, who had seen his alue, who knew that he could depend upon him to peak the truth, consulted him on the most serious affairs of state, and beginning with respect, became miliarly and ardently attached to him. Witham owever remained his home, and he returned to it ways as to a retreat of perfect enjoyment. His cell nd his dole of weekly bread gave him as entire satis-

faction as the most luxuriously furnished villa could afford to one of ourselves; and long after, when he was called elsewhere, and the cares of the great world fell more heavily upon him, he looked to an annual month at Witham for rest of mind and body, and on coming there he would pitch away his grand dress and jump into his sheepskin as we moderns put on our shooting jackets.

While he remained Prior he lived in perfect simplicity and unbroken health of mind and body. The fame of his order spread fast, and with its light the inseparable shadow of superstition. Witham became a place of pilgrimage; miracles were said to be worked by involuntary effluences from its occupants. Then and always Hugo thought little of miracles, turned his back on them for the most part, and discouraged them if not as illusions yet as matters of no consequence. St. Paul thought one intelligible sentence containing truth in it was better than a hundred in an unknown tongue. The Prior of Witham considered that the only miracle worth speaking of was holiness of life. "Little I," writes Adam (parvulus ego), "observed that he worked many miracles himself, but he paid no attention to them." Thus he lived for eleven years with as much rational happiness as, in his opinion, human nature was capable of experiencing. When he lay down upon his horse-rug he slept like a child, undisturbed, save that at intervals, as if he was praying, he muttered a composed Amen. When he awoke he rose and went about his ordinary business: cleaning up dirt, washing dishes and such like, being his favourite early occupation.

The Powers, however—who, according to the Greeks, are jealous of human felicity—thought proper, in due time, to disturb the Prior of Witham. Towards the end of 1183 Walter de Coutances was promoted from the Bishopric of Lincoln to the Archbishopric of Rouen. The see lay vacant for two years and a half, and a

uccessor had now to be provided. A great council vas sitting at Ensham on business of the realm; the King riding over every morning from Woodstock. A leputation of canons from Lincoln came to learn his oleasure for the filling up the vacancy. The canons vere directed to make a choice for themselves and were inable to agree, for the not unnatural reason that each anon considered the fittest person to be himself. Some ne (Adam does not mention the name) suggested, as a vay out of the difficulty, the election of Hugo of Witham. The canons being rich, well to do, and of the modern asy-going sort, laughed at the suggestion of the poor Carthusian. They found to their surprise, however, hat the King was emphatically of the same opinion, nd that Hugo and nobody else was the person that he ntended for them.

The King's pleasure was theirs. They gave their otes, and despatched a deputation over the downs to ommand the Prior's instant presence at Ensham.

A difficulty rose where it was least expected. Not nly was the " Nolo episcopari " in Hugo's case a genuine eeling, not only did he regard worldly promotion s a thing not in the least attractive to him; but, in pite of his regard for Henry, he did not believe that he King was a proper person to nominate the prelates f the Church. He told the canons that the election vas void. They must return to their own cathedral, all the chapter together, invoke the Holy Spirit, put he King of England out of their minds, and consider ather the King of kings; and so, and not otherwise, roceed with their choice.

The canons, wide-eyed with so unexpected a recep- on, retired with their answer. Whether they com- lied with the spirit of Hugo's direction may perhaps e doubted. They, however, assembled at Lincoln with ne proper forms, and repeated the election with the xternal conditions which he had prescribed. As a last

hope of escape he appealed to the Chartreuse, declaring himself unable to accept any office without orders from his superiors; but the authorities there forbade him to decline; and a fresh deputation of canons having come for his escort, he mounted his mule with a heavy heart and set out in their company for Winchester, where the King was then residing.

A glimpse of the party we are able to catch upon their journey. Though it was seven hundred years since, the English September was probably much like what it is at present, and the down country cannot have materially altered. The canons had their palfreys richly caparisoned with gilt saddle-cloths, and servants and sumpter horses. The Bishop elect strapped his wardrobe, his blanket and sheepskin, at the back of his saddle. He rode in this way resisting remonstrance till close to Winchester, when the canons, afraid of the ridicule of the Court, slit the leathers without his knowing it, and passed his baggage to the servants.

Consecration and installation duly followed, and it was supposed that Hugo, a humble monk, owing his promotion to the King, would be becomingly grateful, that he would become just a Bishop, like anybody else, complying with established customs, moving in the regular route, and keeping the waters smooth.

All parties were disagreeably, or rather, as it turned out ultimately, agreeably, surprised. The first intimation which he gave that he had a will of his own followed instantly upon his admission. Corruption or quasi-corruption had gathered already round ecclesiastical appointments. The Archdeacon of Canterbury put in a claim for consecration fees, things in themselves without meaning or justice, but implying that a bishopric was a prize, the lucky winner of which was expected to be generous.

The new prelate held no such estimate of the nature of his appointment—he said he would give as much for

is cathedral as he had given for his mitre, and left the Archdeacon to his reflections.

No sooner was he established and had looked about him, than from the poor tenants of estates of the see he heard complaints of that most ancient of English grievances—the game laws. Hugo, who himself touched no meat, was not likely to have cared for the chase. He was informed that venison must be provided for his installation feast. He told his people to take from his park what was necessary—three hundred stags if they pleased, so little he cared for preserving them; but neither was he a man to have interfered needlessly with the recognised amusements of other people. There must have been a case of real oppression, or he would not have meddled with such things. The offender was no less a person than the head forester of the King himself. Hugo, failing to bring him to reason with mild methods, excommunicated him, and left him to carry his complaints to Henry. It happened that a rich stall was at the moment vacant at Lincoln. The King wanted it for one of his courtiers, and gave the Bishop an opportunity of redeeming his first offence by asking for it as a favour to himself. Henry was at Woodstock; the Bishop, at the moment, was at Dorchester, a place in his diocese thirteen miles off. On receiving Henry's letter the Bishop bade the messenger carry back for answer that prebendal stalls were not for courtiers but for priests. The King must find other means of rewarding temporal services. Henry, with some experience of the pride of ecclesiastics, was unprepared for so abrupt a message—Becket himself had been less insolent—and as he had been personally kind to Hugo, he was hurt as well as offended. He sent again to desire him to come to Woodstock, and prepared, when he arrived, to show him that he was seriously displeased. Then followed one of the most singular scenes in English history—a thing veritably true, which

oaks still standing in Woodstock Park may have witnessed. As soon as word was brought that the Bishop was at the park gate, Henry mounted his horse, rode with his retinue into a glade in the forest, where he alighted, sat down upon the ground with his people, and in this position prepared to receive the criminal. The Bishop approached—no one rose or spoke. He saluted the King; there was no answer. Pausing for a moment, he approached, pushed aside gently an earl who was sitting at Henry's side, and himself took his place. Silence still continued. At last Henry, looking up, called for a needle and thread; he had hurt a finger of his left hand. It was wrapped with a strip of linen rag, the end was loose, and he began to sew. The Bishop watched him through a few stitches, and then, with the utmost composure, said to him—"Quam similis es modo cognatis tuis de Falesiâ"—"your Highness now reminds me of your cousins of Falaise." The words sounded innocent enough—indeed, entirely unmeaning. Alone of the party, Henry understood the allusion; and, overwhelmed by the astonishing impertinence, he clenched his hands, struggled hard to contain himself, and then rolled on the ground in convulsions of laughter.

"Did you hear," he said to his people when at last he found words; "did you hear how this wretch insulted us? The blood of my ancestor the Conqueror, as you know, was none of the purest. His mother was of Falaise, which is famous for its leather work, and when this mocking gentleman saw me stitching my finger, he said I was showing my parentage."

"My good sir," he continued, turning to Hugo, "what do you mean by excommunicating my head forester, and when I make a small request of you, why is it that you not only do not come to see me, but do not send me so much as a civil answer?"

"I know myself," answered Hugo, gravely, "to be indebted to your Highness for my late promotion. I

considered that your Highness's soul would be in danger if I was found wanting in the discharge of my duties; and therefore it was that I used the censures of the Church when I held them necessary, and that I resisted an improper attempt on your part upon a stall in my cathedral. To wait on you on such a subject I thought superfluous, since your Highness approves, as a matter of course, of whatever is rightly ordered in your realm."

What could be done with such a Bishop? No one knew better than Henry the truth of what Hugo was saying, or the worth of such a man to himself. He bade Hugo proceed with the forester as he pleased. Hugo had him publicly whipped, then absolved him, and gave him his blessing, and found in him ever after a fast and faithful friend. The courtiers asked for no more stalls, and all was well.

In Church matters in his own diocese he equally took his own way. Nothing could be more unlike than Hugo to the canons whom he found in possession; yet he somehow bent them all to his will, or carried their wills with his own. "Never since I came to the diocese," he said to his chaplain, "have I had a quarrel with my chapter. It is not that I am easy-going—sum enim everâ pipere mordacior: pepper is not more biting than I can be. I often fly out for small causes; but they take me as they find me. There is not one who mistrusts my love for him, nor one by whom I do not believe myself to be loved."

At table this hardest of monks was the most agreeable of companions. Though no one had practised abstinence more severe, no one less valued it for its own sake, or had less superstition or foolish sentiment about it. It was, and is, considered sacrilege in the Church of Rome to taste food before saying mass. Hugo, if he saw a priest who was to officiate exhausted for want of support, and likely to find a difficulty in getting through his work, would order him to eat as a

point of duty, and lectured him for want of faith if he affected to be horrified.

Like all genuine men, the Bishop was an object of special attraction to children and animals. The little ones in every house that he entered were always found clinging about his legs. Of the attachment of other creatures to him, there was one very singular instance. About the time of his installation there appeared on the mere at Stow Manor, eight miles from Lincoln, a swan of unusual size, which drove the other male birds from off the water. Abbot Adam, who frequently saw the bird, says that he was curiously marked. The bill was saffron instead of black, with a saffron tint on the plumage of the head and neck; and the Abbot adds, he was as much larger than other swans as a swan is larger than a goose. This bird, on the occasion of the Bishop's first visit to the manor, was brought to him to be seen as a curiosity. He was usually unmanageable and savage; but the Bishop knew the way to his heart; fed him, and taught him to poke his head into the pockets of his frock to look for bread crumbs, which he did not fail to find there. Ever after he seemed to know instinctively when the Bishop was expected, flew trumpeting up and down the lake, slapping the water with his wings; when the horses approached, he would march out upon the grass to meet them; strutted at the Bishop's side, and would sometimes follow him upstairs.

It was a miracle of course to the general mind, though explicable enough to those who have observed the physical charm which men who take pains to understand animals are able to exercise over them.

To relate, or even to sketch, Bishop Hugo's public life in the fourteen years that he was at Lincoln, would be beyond the compass of a magazine article. The materials indeed do not exist; for Abbot Adam's life is but a collection of anecdotes; and out of them it is

nly possible here to select a few at random. King lenry died two years after the scene at Woodstock; hen came the accession of Cœur de Lion, the Crusade, ne King's imprisonment in Austria, and the conpiracy of John. Glimpses can be caught of the Bishop n these stormy times quelling insurgent mobs—in lolland, perhaps Holland in Lincolnshire, with his rother William of Avalon, encountering a military nsurrection; single-handed and unarmed, overawing rising at Northampton, when the citizens took posession of the great church, and swords were flashing, nd his attendant chaplains fled terrified, and hid nemselves behind the altars.

These things, however, glad as we should be to know nore of them, the Abbot merely hints at, confining imself to subjects more interesting to the convent ecluses for whose edification he was writing.

But in whatever circumstances he lets us see the ishop, it is always the same simple, brave, unpretendng, wise figure, one to whom nature had been lavish her fairest gifts, and whose training, to modern eyes unpromising, had brought out all that was best in him.

Among the most deadly disorders which at that me prevailed in England was leprosy. The wretched eatures afflicted with so loathsome a disease were garded with a superstitious terror: as the objects in me special way of the wrath of God. They were outwed from the fellowship of mankind, and left to perish misery.

The Bishop, who had clearer views of the nature nd cause of human suffering, established hospitals on s estate for these poor victims of undeserved misery, hose misfortunes appeared to him to demand special re and sympathy. To the horror of his attendants, persisted in visiting them himself; he washed their res with his own hands, kissed them, prayed over em, and consoled them.

"Pardon, blessed Jesus," exclaims Adam, "the unhappy soul of him who tells the story! when I saw my master touch those bloated and livid faces; when I saw him kiss the bleared eyes or eyeless sockets, I shuddered with disgust. But Hugo said to me that these afflicted ones were flowers of Paradise, pearls in the coronet of the Eternal King waiting for the coming of their Lord, who in His own time would change their forlorn bodies into the likeness of his own glory."

He never altered his own monastic habits. He never parted with his hair shirt, or varied from the hardness of the Carthusian rule; but he refused to allow that it possessed any particular sanctity. Men of the world affected regret sometimes to him that they were held by duty to a secular life when they would have preferred to retire into a monastery. The kingdom of God, he used to answer, was not made up of monks and hermits. God, at the day of judgment, would not ask a man why he had not been a monk, but why he had not been a Christian. Charity in the heart, truth in the tongue, chastity in the body, were the virtues which God demanded: and chastity, to the astonishment of his clergy, he insisted, was to be found as well among the married as the unmarried. The wife was as honourable as the virgin. He allowed women (Adam's pen trembles as he records it) to sit at his side at dinner; and had been known to touch and even to embrace them. "Woman," he once said remarkably, "has been admitted to a higher privilege than man. It has not been given to man to be the father of God. To woman it has been given to be God's mother."

Another curious feature about him was his eagerness to be present, whenever possible, at the burial of the dead. He never allowed any one of his priests to bury a corpse if he were himself within reach. If a man had been good, he said, he deserved to be honoured. If he had been a sinner, there was the more reason to

elp him. He would allow nothing to interfere with duty of this kind; and in great cities he would spend hole days by the side of graves. At Rouen once he as engaged to dinner with King Richard himself, and ept the King and the Court waiting for him while he as busy in the cemetery. A courtier came to fetch im. "The King needn't wait," he only said. "Let im go to dinner in the name of God. Better the King ine without my company, than that I leave my Master's ork undone."

Gentle and affectionate as he shows himself in such aits as these, still, as he said, he was *pipere mordacior* -more biting than pepper. When there was occasion or anger there was fierce lightning in him; he was ot afraid of the highest in the land.

The cause for which Becket died was no less dear o Hugo. On no pretext would he permit innovation n the Church's privileges, and he had many a sharp ngagement with the primate, Archbishop Hubert, ho was too complaisant to the secular power. An stance or two may be taken at random. There was certain Richard de Wavre in his diocese, a younger on of a noble house, who was in deacon's orders, but ne elder brother having died childless, was hoping to elapse into the lay estate. This Richard in some one f the many political quarrels of the day brought a harge of treason against Sir Reginald de Argentun, ne of the Bishop's knights. As he was a clerk in rders the Bishop forbade him to appear as prosecutor a secular court or cause. Cœur de Lion and Archishop Hubert ordered him to go on. The Bishop spended him for contumacy, the Archbishop removed ne suspension. The Bishop pronounced sentence of xcommunication, the Archbishop, as primate and gate, issued letters of absolution, which Richard ourished triumphantly in the Bishop's face.

"If my Lord Archbishop absolve you a hundred

times," was Hugo's answer, "a hundred times I will excommunicate you again. Regard my judgment as you will, I hold you bound while you remain impenitent." Death ended the dispute. The wretched Richard was murdered by one of his servants.

Another analogous exploit throws curious light on the habits of the times. Riding once through St. Albans he met the sheriff with the *posse comitatus* escorting a felon to the gallows. The prisoner threw himself before the Bishop and claimed protection. The Bishop reined in his horse and asked who the man was.

"My Lord," said the sheriff shortly, "it is no affair of yours; let us pass and do our duty."

"Eh!" then said Hugo. "Blessed be God; we will see about that; make over the man to me; and go back and tell the judges that I have taken him from you."

"My lords judges," he said, when they came to remonstrate, "I need not remind you of the Church's privilege of sanctuary; understand that where the Bishop is, the Church is. He who can consecrate the sanctuary carries with him the sacredness of the sanctuary."

The humiliation of an English king at Becket's tomb had been a lesson too severe and too recent to be forgotten. "We may not dispute with you," the judges replied; "if you choose to let this man go we shall not oppose you, but you must answer for it to the King's Highness."

"So be it," answered Hugo, "you have spoken well. I charge myself with your prisoner. The responsibility be mine."

There was probably something more in the case than appears on the surface. The sanctuary system worked in mitigation of a law which in itself was frightfully cruel, and there may have been good reason why the

life of the poor wretch should have been spared. The Bishop set him free. It is to be hoped that "he sinned no more."

The common-sense view which the Bishop took of miracles has been already spoken of, but we may give one or two other illustrations of it. Doubtless, he did not disbelieve in the possibility of miracles, but he knew how much imposture passed current under the name, and whether true or false he never missed a chance of checking or affronting superstition.

Stopping once in a country town on a journey from Paris to Troyes, he invited the parish priest to dine with him. The priest declined, but came in the evening to sit and talk with the chaplains. He was a lean old man, dry and shrivelled to the bones, and he told them a marvellous story which he bade them report to their master.

Long ago, he said, when he was first ordained priest, he fell into mortal sin, and without having confessed or done penance he had presumed to officiate at the altar. He was sceptical too, it seemed, a premature Voltairian. "Is it credible," he had said to himself when consecrating the host, "that I, a miserable sinner, can manufacture and handle and eat the body and blood of God?" He was breaking the wafer at the moment; blood flowed at the fracture—the part which was in his hand became flesh. He dropped it terrified into the chalice, and the wine turned instantly into blood. The precious things were preserved. The priest went to Rome, confessed to the Pope himself, and received absolution. The faithful now flocked from all parts of France to adore the mysterious substances which were to be seen in the parish church; and the priest trusted that he might be honoured on the following day by the presence of Bishop Hugo and his retinue.

The chaplains rushed to the Bishop open-mouthed,

eager to be allowed to refresh their souls on so divine a spectacle.

"In the name of God," he said quietly, "let unbelievers go rushing after signs and wonders. What have we to do with such things who partake every day of the heavenly sacrifice?" He dismissed the Priest with his blessing, giving him the benefit of a doubt, though he probably suspected him to be a rogue, and forbade his chaplains most strictly to yield to idle curiosity.

He was naturally extremely humorous, and humour in such men will show itself sometimes in playing with things, in the sacredness of which they may believe fully notwithstanding. It has been said, indeed, that no one has any real faith if he cannot afford to play with it.

Among the relics at Fécamp, in Normandy, was a so-called bone of Mary Magdalene. This precious jewel was kept with jealous care. It was deposited in a case, and within the case was double wrapped in silk. Bishop Hugo was taken to look at it in the presence of a crowd of monks, abbots, and other dignitaries; mass had been said first as a preparation; the thing was then taken out of its box and exhibited, so far as it could be seen through its envelope. The Bishop asked to look at the bone itself; and no one venturing to touch it, he borrowed a knife and calmly slit the covering. He took it up, whatever it may have been, gazed at it, raised it to his lips as if to kiss it, and then suddenly with a strong grip of his teeth bit a morsel out of its side. A shriek of sacrilege rang through the church. Looking round quietly the Bishop said, "Just now we were handling in our unworthy fingers the body of the Holy One of all. We passed Him between our teeth and down into our stomach; why may we not do the like with the members of his saints?"

We have left to the last the most curious of all the

stories connected with this singular man. We have seen him with King Henry; we will now follow him into the presence of Cœur de Lion.

Richard, it will be remembered, on his return from his captivity plunged into war with Philip of France, carrying out a quarrel which had commenced in the Holy Land. The King, in distress for money, had played tricks with Church patronage which Hugo had firmly resisted. Afterwards an old claim on Lincoln diocese for some annual services was suddenly revived, which had been pretermitted for sixty years The arrears for all that time were called for and exacted, and the clergy had to raise among themselves 3000 marks: hard measure of this kind perhaps induced Hugo to look closely into further demands.

In 1197, when Richard was in Normandy, a pressing message came home from him for supplies. A council was held at Oxford, when Archbishop Hubert, who was Chancellor, required each prelate and great nobleman in the King's name to provide three hundred knights at his own cost to serve in the war. The Bishop of London supported the primate. The Bishop of Lincoln followed. Being a stranger, he said, and ignorant on his arrival of English laws, he had made it his business to study them. The see of Lincoln, he was aware, was bound to military service, but it was service in England and not abroad. The demand of the King was against the liberties which he had sworn to defend, and he would rather die than betray them.

The Bishop of Salisbury, gathering courage from Hugo's resistance, took the same side. The council broke up in confusion, and the Archbishop wrote to Richard to say that he was unable to raise the required force, and that the Bishop of Lincoln was the cause. Richard, who, with most noble qualities, had the temper of a fiend, replied instantly with an order to seize and confiscate the property of the rebellious prelates. The

Bishop of Salisbury was brought upon his knees, but Hugo, fearless as ever, swore that he would excommunicate any man who dared to execute the King's command; and as it was known that he would keep his word, the royal officers hesitated to act. The King wrote a second time more fiercely, threatening death if they disobeyed, and the Bishop, not wishing to expose them to trouble on his account, determined to go over and encounter the tempest in person.

At Rouen, on his way to Roche d'Andeli, where Richard was lying, he was encountered by the Earl Marshal and Lord Albemarle, who implored him to send some conciliatory message by them, as the King was so furious that they feared he might provoke the anger of God by some violent act.

The Bishop declined their assistance. He desired them merely to tell the King that he was coming. They hurried back, and he followed at his leisure. The scene that ensued was even stranger than the interview already described with Henry in the park at Woodstock.

Cœur de Lion, when he arrived at Roche d'Andeli, was hearing mass in the church. He was sitting in a great chair at the opening into the choir, with the Bishops of Durham and Ely on either side. Church ceremonials must have been conducted with less stiff propriety than at present. Hugo advanced calmly and made the usual obeisance. Richard said nothing, but frowned, looked sternly at him for a moment, and turned away.

"Kiss me, my Lord King," said the Bishop. It was the ordinary greeting between the sovereign and the spiritual peers. The King averted his face still further.

"Kiss me, my Lord," said Hugo again, and he caught Cœur de Lion by the vest and shook him, Abbot Adam standing shivering behind.

"Non meruisti—thou hast not deserved it," growled Richard.

"I have deserved it," replied Hugo, and shook him harder.

Had he shown fear, Cœur de Lion would probably have trampled on him, but who could resist such marvellous audacity? The kiss was given. The Bishop passed up to the altar and became absorbed in the service, Cœur de Lion curiously watching him.

When mass was over there was a formal audience, but the result of it was decided already. Hugo declared his loyalty in everything, save what touched his duty to God. The King yielded, and threw the blame of the quarrel on the too complaisant primate.

Even this was not all. This Bishop afterwards requested a private interview. He told Richard solemnly that he was uneasy for his soul, and admonished him, if he had anything on his conscience, to confess it.

The King said he was conscious of no sin, save of a certain rage against his French enemies.

"Obey God!" the Bishop said, "and God will humble your enemies for you—and you for your part take heed you offend not Him or hurt your neighbour. I speak in sadness, but rumour says you are unfaithful to your queen."

The lion was tamed for the moment. The King acknowledged nothing but restrained his passion, only observing afterwards, "If all bishops were like my Lord of Lincoln, not a prince among us could lift his head against them."

The trouble was not over. Hugo returned to England to find his diocese in confusion. A bailiff of the Earl of Leicester had taken a man out of sanctuary in Lincoln and had hung him. Instant excommunication followed. The Bishop compelled every one who had been concerned in the sacrilege to repair, stripped naked

to the waist, to the spot where the body was buried, to dig it up putrid as it was, and carry it on their shoulders round the town, to halt at each church door to be flogged by the priests belonging to the place, and then with their own hands to rebury the man in the cemetery from which he had been originally carried off.

Fresh demands for money in another, but no less irregular, form followed from the King. There was again a council in London. The Archbishop insisted that Hugo should levy a subsidy upon his clergy.

"Do you not know, my Lord," the primate said, "that the King is as thirsty for money as a man with the dropsy for water?"

"His Majesty may be dropsical for all that I know," Hugo answered, "but I will not be the water for him to swallow."

Once more he started for Normandy, but not a second time to try the effect of his presence on Cœur de Lion. On approaching Angers he was met by Sir Gilbert de Lacy with the news that the Lion-heart was cold. Richard had been struck by an arrow in the trenches at Chaluz. The wound had mortified and he was dead. He was to be buried at Fontevrault, but the country was in the wildest confusion. The roads were patrolled by banditti, and de Lacy strongly advised the Bishop to proceed no further.

Hugo's estimate of danger was unlike de Lacy's. "I have more fear," he said, "of failing through cowardice in my duty to my lord and prince. If the thieves take my horse and clothes from me, I can walk, and walk the lighter. If they tie me fast, I cannot help myself."

Paying a brief visit to Queen Berengaria, at Beaufort Abbey, on the way, he reached Fontevrault on Palm Sunday, the day of the funeral, and was in time to pay the last honours to the sovereign whom he had defied and yet loved so dearly.

His own time was also nearly out, and this hurried sketch must also haste to its end. One more scene, however, remains to be described.

To Henry and Richard, notwithstanding their many faults, the Bishop was ardently attached. For their sakes, and for his country's, he did what lay in him to influence for good the brother who was to succeed to the throne.

At the time of Richard's death, John was with his nephew Arthur in Brittany. That John and not Arthur must take Richard's place the Bishop seems to have assumed as unavoidable; Arthur was but ten years old and the times were too rough for a regency. John made haste to Fontevrault, receiving on his way the allegiance of many of the barons. After the funeral he made a profusion of promises to the Bishop of Lincoln as to his future conduct.

The Bishop had no liking for John. He knew him to have been paltry, false, and selfish.

"I trust you mean what you say," he said in reply, "Nostis quia satis aversor mendacium,—you know that I hate lying."

John produced an amulet which he wore round his neck with a chain. That he seemed to think would help him to walk straight.

The Bishop looked at it scornfully. "Do you trust in a senseless stone?" he said. "Trust in the living rock in heaven—the Lord Jesus Christ. Anchor your hopes in Him and He will direct you."

On one side of the church at Fontevrault was a celebrated sculpture of the day of judgment. The Judge was on his throne; on his left were a group of crowned kings led away by devils to be hurled into the smoking pit. Hugo pointed significantly to them. "Understand," he said, "that those men are going into unending torture. Think of it, and let your wisdom teach you the prospects of princes who, while they govern

men, are unable to rule themselves, and become slaves in hell through eternity. Fear this, I say, while there is time. The hour will come when it will have been too late."

John affected to smile, pointed to the good kings on the other side, and declared, with infinite volubility, that he would be found one of those.

The fool's nature, however, soon showed itself. Hugo took leave of him with a foreboding heart, paid one more bright brief visit in the following year to his birthplace in the south, and then returned to England to die. He had held his see but fourteen years, and was no more than sixty-five. His asceticism had not impaired his strength. At his last visit to the Chartreuse he had distanced all his companions on the steep hill-side, but illness overtook him on his way home. He arrived in London, at his house in the Old Temple, in the middle of September, to feel that he was rapidly dying. Of death itself, it is needless to say, he had no kind of fear. "By the holy nut," he used to say, in his queer way ("per sanctam nucem,[1] sic enim vice juramenti ad formationem verbi interdum loquebatur"), "by the holy nut, we should be worse off if we were not allowed to die at all."

He prepared with his unvarying composure. As his illness increased, and he was confined to his bed, his hair shirt hurt him. Twisting into knots, as he shifted from side to side, it bruised and wounded his skin. The rules of the order would have allowed him to dispense with it, but he could not be induced to let it go; but he took animal food, which the doctor prescribed as good for him, and quietly and kindly submitted to whatever else was ordered for him. He knew, however, that his life was over, and with constant confession held himself ready for the change. Great people

[1] Perhaps for "crucem," as we say "by *Gad*," to avoid the actual word.

came about him. John himself came; but he received him coldly. Archbishop Hubert came once; he did not care, perhaps, to return a second time.

The Archbishop, sitting by his bed, after the usual condolences, suggested that the Bishop of Lincoln might like to use the opportunity to repent of any sharp expressions which he had occasionally been betrayed into using. As the hint was not taken, he referred especially to himself as one of those who had something to complain of.

"Indeed, your Grace," replied Hugo, "there have been passages of words between us, and I have much to regret in relation to them. It is not, however, what I have said to your Grace, but what I have omitted to say. I have more feared to offend your Grace than to offend my Father in heaven. I have withheld words which I ought to have spoken, and I have thus sinned against your Grace and desire your forgiveness. Should it please God to spare my life I purpose to amend that fault."

As his time drew near, he gave directions for the disposition of his body, named the place in Lincoln Cathedral where he was to be buried, and bade his chaplain make a cross of ashes on the floor of his room, lift him from his bed at the moment of departure, and place him upon it.

It was a November afternoon. The choristers of St. Paul's were sent for to chant the compline to him for the last time. He gave a sign when they were half through. They lifted him and laid him on the ashes. The choristers sang on, and as they began the Nunc Dimittis he died.

So parted one of the most beautiful spirits that was ever incarnated in human clay. Never was man more widely mourned over, or more honoured in his death. He was taken down to Lincoln, and the highest and the lowest alike had poured out to meet the body. A

company of poor Jews, the offscouring of mankind, for whom rack and gridiron were considered generally too easy couches, came to mourn over one whose justice had sheltered even them.

John was at Lincoln at the time, and William of Scotland with him; and on the hill, a mile from the town, two kings, three archbishops, fourteen bishops, a hundred abbots, and as many earls and barons, were waiting to receive the sad procession.

King John and the archbishops took the bier upon their shoulders, and waded knee-deep through the mud to the cathedral. The King of Scotland stood apart in tears.

It was no vain pomp or unmeaning ceremony, but the genuine healthful recognition of human worth. The story of Hugo of Lincoln has been too long unknown to us. It deserves a place in every biography of English Worthies. It ought to be familiar to every English boy. Such men as he were the true builders of our nation's greatness. Like the "well-tempered mortar" in old English walls, which is hard as the stone itself, their actions and their thoughts are the cement of our national organisation, and bind together yet such parts of it as still are allowed to stand.

COMPENSATION

One day an Antelope was lying with her fawn at the foot of a flowering Mimosa. The weather was intensely sultry, and a Dove, who had sought shelter from the heat among the leaves, was cooing above her head.

"Happy bird!" said the Antelope. "Happy bird! to whom the air is given for an inheritance, and whose flight is swifter than the wind. At your will you alight upon the ground, at your will you sweep into the sky, and fly races with the driving clouds; while I, poor I, am bound a prisoner to this miserable earth, and wear out my pitiable life crawling to and fro upon its surface."

Then the Dove answered, "It is sweet to sail along the sky, to fly from land to land, and coo among the valleys; but, Antelope, when I have sat above amidst the branches and watched your little one close its tiny lips upon your breast, and feed its life on yours, I have felt that I could strip off my wings, lay down my plumage, and remain all my life upon the ground only once to know such blessed enjoyment."

The breeze sighed among the boughs of the Mimosa, and a voice came trembling out of the rustling leaves: "If the Antelope mourns her destiny, what should the Mimosa do? The Antelope is the swiftest among the animals. It rises in the morning; the ground flies under its feet—in the evening it is a hundred miles away. The Mimosa is feeding its old age on the same soil which quickened its seed cells into activity. The seasons roll by me and leave me in the old place. The winds sway among my branches, as if they longed to bear me away with them, but they pass on and leave me behind. The wild birds come and go. The flocks

move by me in the evening on their way to the pleasant waters. I can never move. My cradle must be my grave."

Then from below, at the root of the tree, came a voice which neither bird, nor Antelope, nor tree had ever heard, as a Rock Crystal from its prison in the limestone followed on the words of the Mimosa.

"Are ye all unhappy?" it said. "If ye are, then what am I? Ye all have life. You! O Mimosa, you! whose fair flowers year by year come again to you, ever young, and fresh, and beautiful—you who can drink the rain with your leaves, who can wanton with the summer breeze, and open your breast to give a home to the wild birds, look at me and be ashamed. I only am truly wretched."

"Alas!" said the Mimosa, "we have life, which you have not, it is true. We have also what you have not, its shadow—death. My beautiful children, which year by year I bring out into being, expand in their loveliness only to die. Where they are gone I too shall soon follow, while you will flash in the light of the last sun which rises upon the earth."

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I WILL GO WITH
THEE.
& BE THY GVIDE
IN THY MOST NEED
TO GO BY THY SIDE

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